15th ANNIVERSARY NUMBER

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 July, 1936 Number 7

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

After Fifteen Years
R. P. D. & JOHN STRACHEY

A Congress of World Trade Unionists
JOHN A. MAHON

Trade Unionism Discussed
BERNARD SULLIVAN (Tailors and Garment Workers)
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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 18 JULY, 1936 NUMBER 7

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Fifteen Years—New Problems—New World Situation—Fascist Offensive and War—The Fight in Britain—The National Government and Collective Security—Britain and Hitler—"Reform" of the League of Nations —Issues of Future War—The National Government as Warmaker —Lessons of Fifteen Years and the United Front.

WITH the present number the LABOUR MONTHLY reaches the fifteenth anniversary since its foundation in 1921. These years have seen big changes. In our tenth anniversary number in 1931 we had occasion to review the development of ten years and the demonstration in practical experience of the Marxist analysis of 1921 against the capitalist and reformist analysis over those ten years. To-day such demonstration no longer needs argument. The 1931 survey was written before the collapse of the MacDonald Labour Government, before the completion of the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, before the collapse of German Social Democracy and the advance of Fascism over Central Europe, before the victories of the united front in France and Spain. In 1921 capitalism was rebuilding its shattered structure after the shaking of the war and the first world revolutionary wave to enter on the period of stabilisation. Where is capitalist stabilisation to-day? In 1931 capitalism was entering into the depths of the world economic crisis. To-day capitalism is moving headlong to new world war. In 1921 German Social Democracy was the model party of the Second International, the supposed triumphant alternative to Bolshevism. In 1931 German Social Democracy, with diminished confidence, was still holding out its supposed alternative (like the British Labour Party to-day) to Communism or Fascism. Where is German Social Democracy to-day? In 1921 MacDonald and Thomas

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were leading the Labour Party and expelling the Communists as enemies of the working class. In 1931 MacDonald and Thomas were still leading the Labour Party against the Communists, and heading the Second Labour Government ; but they were already preparing their open treachery to form the National Government. Where are MacDonald and Thomas to-day ? In 1921 the Russian Soviet Republic was still spoken of by patronising sympathisers as an " experiment," and by enemies, as chaos, tyranny and ruin on the verge of collapse. To-day the triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union is acclaimed even by the leaders of reformism, by the Webbs and the Bauers ; the Soviet Union stands as the strongest buttress of the working class and of peace, and in the midst of the offensive of fascism and reaction prepares a still further extension of proletarian democracy. In 1921 the united working class front was first proposed by the Communist International, and was turned down by every Social Democratic Party. To-day the united working class front is triumphing in France and Spain, and advancing with ever greater strength against the last strongholds of reactionary opposition in Britain. These fifteen years speak their political lesson to all, and call for that lesson to be realised in action to-day.

TO-DAY we have to face new problems, differing in character from those of the previous period, and leaving small time for retrospect. We are entering into a new era, whose outlines can still only be partially foreseen. These past fifteen years have been the formative years of the post-war period, of an era that is ending. All the unsolved issues and conflicts of these years are now coming to a head. The pillars of the post-war era of capitalism, Versailles, Washington, Locarno, lie all in ruins. The outcome of the policies of Social Democracy has reached full circle in Fascism. The combined bankruptcies of the policies of Western Imperialism and Social Democracy have produced the present world situation. Fascism, having established its domination in Central Europe, where reformism opened the gates to the enemy, now extends its menace, with the support of its class-allies in all

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countries, over the world. Against this menace the victory of the revolutionary path in the Soviet Union provides the strongest impregnable pillar of resistance, around which the forces of the working class and of peace can gather. Thus the advance of imperialism to renewed battle for the division of the world is taking place under new and peculiar conditions. Fascism is at once the leader of the reactionary offensive against the working class, against socialism, against all democracy and against all culture, and the leader of the drive of imperialism to new world war. *This is the peculiar character of the new world situation we have to face.* To this situation there is no previous parallel. 1936 is not 1921, nor 1914. The lessons of the past fifteen years need to be reinforced and carried forward to a new stage. Victory depends on the understanding of this new world situation and the consequent conditions of the struggle.

EVERY question of foreign policy, the issues of war and peace, now more and more visibly dominating all others, and every question of internal policy and revolutionary tactics, now more and more closely interlocked with world issues of war and peace, needs to be judged in the light of this new world situation. Nowhere is this understanding more important than in Britain ; for the crux of world policy at the moment turns here, on the rôle of British Imperialism and the rôle of the British working class movement. In the years up to the conquest of power by Hitler, the crucial centre of the world battle lay in Germany ; Germany was the centre of the antagonisms of imperialism, of the conflict between imperialism and the working class revolution, of the tug-of-war between an Eastern and a Western policy, reflecting the question of the anti-Soviet front, and of the struggle between the working class movement and Fascism ; the issue turned on the rôle of Social Democracy and the success or failure to realise the united working class front. That battle was lost by the rejection of the united working class front ; and the present menacing world situation is the consequence. This

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was the strongest experience of the labour movement outside the Soviet Union in these fifteen years. All our problems to-day are closely related to this experience.

TO-DAY the ground of the fight has advanced. It is not merely necessary to learn the direct lesson of Germany, the lesson of the necessity of the united front against Fascism within each country. The fascist offensive, building on its domination in Germany, has now expanded to the offensive of fascist world war. All the reactionary forces in every country, including in the non-fascist countries, are collaborating in this world offensive, which has its main staff and organisation in Hitler-Germany. To-day, now that the French united working class front is holding off the fascist offensive there, has thrown from power the right wing pro-Hitler forces and policies and forced through the Franco-Soviet Pact, the centre of the immediate battle moves to England. It is the policy of British Imperialism that is the most dangerous force playing into the hands of the fascist war offensive, undermining collective security from within, and in fact, through a host of contradictions, zig-zags and hesitations, assisting the path to war. And it is the policy so far pursued by the dominant Labour Party leadership, the original preaching of confidence in the foreign policy of the National Government, the preaching of confidence in the peace promises of Hitler, and above all the refusal of the united working class front and blocking of international working class unity, which is in danger of repeating on a still wider scale the disastrous experience of German Social Democracy in Germany and opening the gates to fascist war. But this battle is not yet finished. There is still time to reverse this policy, to realise the united front in Britain and therefore internationally, to bring down the National Government, to realise the collective front of peoples powerful enough to check the fascist war offensive, and in this way to transform the character of the period that is now opening. The character of the new era of the world situation into which we are entering cannot yet be judged beforehand, because it depends on the outcome of this crucial struggle now in progress.

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AN awakening is beginning to the urgent issues of the new world situation, but still all too slowly and incompletely. The open cynical action of the National Government in taking the lead to break the sanctionist front and proclaim the victory of Italian fascist aggression and the failure of the League of Nations has aroused a storm of opposition and anger from the Labour Party ranks and the supporters of peace. This storm against the National Government as the enemy of peace was long overdue. The fight needs to be carried forward to the downfall of the National Government. But the character of the fight still reveals dangerous limitations of outlook which require to be removed. For the fight still tends to be formally isolated to the Italian issue, and fails to be directed against the main drive of the National Government's policy and the main menace of war.

LAST autumn, when the Labour Party was proclaiming its confidence in the foreign policy of the National Government and applauding Hoare as "the voice of Britain," the Communist Party was alone in proclaiming the necessity to fight *for* collective peace and *against* the National Government's imperialist policy of betrayal of collective peace. The correctness of that line is to-day visible to all. But this fight needed to have been waged then, when the Italo-Abyssinian war was still threatening, could still have been prevented or rapidly ended, instead of only now when Italy has already won its victory. Then was the time to expose the ban on arms to Abyssinia, the ban on financial help to Abyssinia, the imperialist intrigues against Abyssinia ; then was the time to have called for the immediate imposition of full coal, iron and oil sanctions, which could have speedily ended the war. But at that time the reformist peace forces were congratulating the Government on the partial economic sanctions and proving by statistics their inevitable efficacy. Only now, when the harm is done, when the Abyssinians have been betrayed to the aggressor, these same forces begin to raise their voices for extreme measures which are no longer in question ; and they do so in such a fashion as to distract attention from the main *present* danger, the present

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policy which the National Government is pursuing, its policy in relation to Hitler, its policy of the Anglo-French-German Conference and the destruction of the League of Nations, and the new war which is preparing. Will their eyes be opened once again too late, only after British policy has assisted Hitler to let loose his war, instead of now when is the time to fight ?

THE Italian war offensive cannot be, and never could be, separated from the major Hitler war offensive, and the policy of the National Government to Hitler, which was the centre of its policy. The failure to see this was the cardinal fault of the main body of the peace movement. While they were applauding the National Government for its proclamations of opposition to Italy in the name of " collective security," they were failing to see that the National Government was continuously selling the pass to Hitler and explicitly refusing any collective peace front against Nazi aggression. On the contrary, they went so far as to applaud the National Government's " conciliatory " attitude to Hitler, and to urge acceptance of Hitler's " peace offer " (*i.e.*, demand for guarantees against war in the West, while he could carry through his openly proclaimed war aims in Central and Eastern Europe). But this very line inevitably broke also the collective peace front against Italian aggression. For it was immediately obvious to the other countries that British policy interpreted " collective security " as the duty of other countries to rally to British support where British interests were affected, while explicitly declaring Britain could recognise no commitments in regions where British interests were not affected. It is evident that on this basis there can be no collective front. And on top of these declarations the British statesmen had the nerve to blame the other countries for insufficiently rallying to British support and to draw the conclusion that thereby collective security had been proved a failure. On this basis British policy now proceeds to the open attack on the Covenant of the League and to further intrigues with Hitler. Here is where the fight of the peace movement needed and needs to be centred, if it is not to trail in the wake of British imperialist policy, rising in anger only

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where British imperialist interests are affected, and turning a blind eye where British policy directly supports the war forces. The peace fight must advance to the central present issue of the corrupt collaboration of the National Government and Hitler against the League and collective peace. This is the heart of the international situation.

THE National Government has begun to lay its cards, or some of its cards, on the table. The recent speeches of Baldwin, of Eden, of Hoare and of Neville Chamberlain, no less than the semi-official utterances of Lord Lothian, Lord Rennell and the *Times* editorials, or the reported Vansittart Plan, all express a definite line. What is this line ? First, that the League of Nations has failed, and that the Covenant must in consequence be " reformed." Second, that economic sanctions have been proved ineffective, and that only military sanctions can be effective. Third, that the general system of collective security embodied in the Covenant is impracticable and must be abandoned ; Articles 10 and 16 must go ; general collective security must be replaced by separatist regional systems. Fourth, that Britain can only undertake obligations where its interests are directly concerned, in Western Europe and the Mediterranean—thus pointedly excluding Central and Eastern Europe. Fifth, that British policy must be directed above all to securing a " lasting agreement with Germany " (Baldwin in the House of Commons on June 19) and building up the unity of Western Imperialism through the projected Anglo-French-German Conference, *i.e.*, excluding the Soviet Union as well as the smaller States of Europe ; on this basis the endeavour should be made to bring back Germany to an emasculated League, with the provisions of any general and binding collective security removed. It is sufficiently obvious where all this line leads.

WE have in fact at the present moment come to a point at which decisions of policy are being taken that will reach far into the future. This applies equally to

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imperialism and to the working class movement. All the old lines of international relations are being thrown into the melting pot. The " reform " of the League of Nations is now officially on the agenda for September. A far-reaching discussion on all the bases of policy is now developing through all strata. *Through this discussion the issue of future war is already being fought in a preliminary form.* For nine tenths of the proposals for the " reform " of the League of Nations are in fact proposals for its effective liquidation by the final removal of its formal basis for the collective maintenance of peace. Why are these proposals brought forward at the present point ? Because at the present point the League of Nations, originally established after the war to stabilise the gains of the victor imperialist Powers, is now proving an obstacle to the new war plans of imperialism. This was already shown when the leading Powers driving to war, Germany and Japan, left the League. It is still further shown to-day when the offensive is now being directly launched against the basis of the League. The path to the new world war lies necessarily over the corpse of the League Covenant. The forces driving to war are accordingly taking steps to make sure of the corpse beforehand. But this offensive cannot be led directly by the fascist States from outside the League. It can only reach its full strength and menace, as the ever more open preparation of future war, when it is led by British Imperialism from within the League. This is the point we have now reached. The real character of British imperialist policy, as the pacemaker of the fascist war offensive, beneath all the outer contradictions and zig-zags, is beginning to show itself more and more clearly.

THE National Government, having assisted Hitler stage by stage to his present strength, having assisted Nazi rearmament and sunk its money in Nazi Germany, having protected by its diplomacy each successive coup of Nazi aggression, is now advancing to the culminating stage of the direct attack on the basis of the League, *i.e.*, is engaged in sawing away the remaining diplomatic obstacles to the Nazi offensive and renewed world war. This is the significance of the question

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of the " reform " of the League of Nations now pressed to the forefront by the National Government. If the National Government were concerned for strengthening the basis of collective security, then the French Peace Plan would provide a basis for discussion. But the French Peace Plan is fully ignored in British discussion ; the whole concentration of policy is directed towards reaching an understanding with Hitler, on the basis of the sacrifice of the smaller states in Europe. There is still division in British policy. Only the most conscious reactionary section openly seeks alliance with Hitler and the anti-Soviet line. Another section, seeing the ultimate menace to British imperialist interests of Hitler's expansion and domination in Europe, still advocates general collective security. Between these two lines the main body of British bourgeois opinion wavers, seeking a " middle " course of conciliation with Hitler, seeking to maintain collective security where British interests are concerned, but to abandon it where British interests are not concerned, hoping that Hitler's blow may fall in directions not affecting British interests. Just this " middle " course makes war certain. For the situation allows no middle course. The only consistent line for peace would compel alignment with the collective peace front of France, the Soviet Union and the smaller States opposed to war. From this course British Imperialism shrinks. By this refusal British Imperialism, even while fearing Hitler, inevitably becomes in practice the ally of his offensive, and, even while fearing war, paves the way for war. The classic policy of Grey before 1914 appears in a new guise.

IN order to defeat this policy, it is necessary to defeat the National Government. But this requires a powerful and united mass front in Britain with a clear line of policy, which can advance parallel to the People's Front in France. At the present moment this is the key question of the international situation. The united working class front is at the present moment more urgent in Britain, and internationally, than at any time these fifteen years. The same strata of leadership which have supported the foreign policy of Hitler,

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which have supported the foreign policy of the National Government and paralysed the front against it, are the opponents of the united working class front. The battle is a single battle. The victory of the united working class front and of the People's Front in Britain is not only the key to advance in Britain, but the key to the transformation of the world situation. Fifteen years ago MacDonald and Thomas led the fight against working class unity and for the exclusion of the Communists. To-day we have seen where that path has led. Yet to-day the Morrisons and Citrines have no shame in using the selfsame arguments that MacDonald and Thomas then used. But the situation is a hundred times more urgent to-day than it was fifteen years ago. There is no unlimited possibility of repeating old experiences and lessons. The issues return, with vastly increased import. The possibilities, for good and for evil, are greater. Fifteen years of the consequences of reformism and division in the working class movement in Western and Central Europe lie behind us, and have brought the present situation of extreme menace. We have it in our power to open a new chapter in the period now before us ; and France has already shown the first possibilities of the path of fighting unity. Which will be the path in Britain ? The decisions which are now requiring to be taken, on the cardinal questions of unity, of international unity, and of the fight for peace, will govern the character of the coming period. The lessons of the past fifteen years combine with the present urgent situation to point the way forward.

R.P.D.

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FIFTEEN YEARS OF THE LABOUR MONTHLY

By JOHN STRACHEY

THIS issue makes the LABOUR MONTHLY fifteen years old. And fifteen years is a long run for a revolutionary publication. Indeed, I am not sure that it is not a record for a British revolutionary publication. Is it not true to say that the LABOUR MONTHLY is the only British publication which has both kept on being revolutionary, and kept on being published, for fifteen consecutive years? Moreover, the LABOUR MONTHLY finishes its first fifteen years with an influence greater than at any previous moment in its history; and this is certainly unique amongst British revolutionary publications.

One does not always realise the nature of that influence until one leaves England. But then one discovers that people in America, in Australia, and in Asia read the LABOUR MONTHLY. Naturally very few people read it in each country; but some people read it, I suppose, in almost literally all the countries of the world. In its own way the LABOUR MONTHLY has become a world publication (the embryo of those gigantic publications which we can conceive of in a unified socialist world). And it has become so for a very good reason: R.P.D. in a sense always writes of world politics. Naturally his closest attention and most detailed knowledge are concerned with the British situation; but even if he is discussing some apparently intimate point in the relationship between British political parties there is always the sense of the world scene as a background to his analysis.

I was still an ill-informed Oxford undergraduate in the early days of the LABOUR MONTHLY and so can say nothing about the part it played in the post-war revolutionary situation. I remember it first in the period of the temporary stabilisation of capitalism between 1923 and 1929. As a fairly orthodox member of the Labour Party and the I.L.P., I used in those days to read the LABOUR MONTHLY in general, and R.P.D.'s notes in particular, with very mixed feelings—with feelings perhaps about equally compounded of admiration and irritation. The notes used to seem to me, I remember, quite as brilliant as they do now, but I was always using words like 'perverse' and 'doctrinaire' about them. They seemed to me so out of touch with the way the world was going.

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But as it turned out the LABOUR MONTHLY was not out of touch with reality. It was those of us who took temporary stabilisation at its face value who proved to be out of touch with reality. The influence of the LABOUR MONTHLY was probably lower in those years, either than it was at the beginning or than it is now ; but perhaps in the future the persistent struggle for a revolutionary line which it put up during that period will seem its most notable service. One phrase which R.P.D. used somewhere about 1927 or 1928 sticks in my mind. He wrote about keeping our forces together in what was " admittedly a period of heavy going for the revolutionary working class." It was in that period of " heavy going " that the LABOUR MONTHLY performed some of its greatest services.

Then there were R.P.D.'s prophecies ; for he prophesied both that the new world crisis of capitalism would come, and, what is more, he prophesied how it would come. So far as I know, he is the only economist who pointed out the inevitability of break-down as soon as the outflow of capital from America ceased, before that event happened. His notes in which he dealt with that subject remain to my mind the classic example of the predictive power which Marxist theory gives to a skilled observer. There is no better way of demonstrating that Marxism really does enable men to foretell the general line of development which lies ahead than by quoting these notes to them and comparing them with the same analysis made by the capitalist theorists, like Salter, after the event.

With the outbreak of the crisis of 1929 the LABOUR MONTHLY came into its own. With commendable forbearance, R.P.D. refrained from keeping the words " I told you so " as a permanent motto for his notes. I remember an ex-member of the Communist Party, now a prominent lecturer at London University, coming into my flat one day in the autumn of 1931, just after Britain had gone off the gold standard. " To think," he said, with extreme bitterness, " to think that I should live to see R.P.D.'s notes coming true." It was almost too much for him to bear.

But he must bear it. R.P.D.'s notes are still coming true. Surely the blindest of us should now be able to see that in principle the line for which the LABOUR MONTHLY has fought during every one of its fifteen years of existence has been proved by the events of those fifteen years to be the only correct one. The British working class movement has, as a movement, up till now rejected that line. At every important crisis leaders who offered some attractive and specious alternative to the rigorous line of struggle put forward in these columns have had their way.

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At long last there are signs that the LABOUR MONTHLY's fifteen years of consistent preaching is having its effect upon the main body of the British working-class movement. On the day I write this note there comes the news that the Fabian Society has voted for the acceptance of the Communist Party's application for affiliation to the Labour Party. How strange and impossible that piece of news would have seemed in almost every one of the previous fifteen years! That objective for which the LABOUR MONTHLY has ever fought, and which one can indicate by calling it the unity of the British working class on the basis of the scientific struggle for socialism, is to-day appreciably nearer to achievement than it has ever been before.

We are
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If you no longer have the birthday card which was inserted last month you can fill in one of the forms on the last page and post with your gift and it is bound to receive a welcome.

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THE I.F.T.U. CONGRESS IN LONDON

By JOHN A. MAHON

ON the 6th of July, in London, the International Federation of Trade Unions will commence its Seventh Triennial Congress. The main items on the agenda will be Economic Planning and the Fight against Fascism. But the real issue is that of unity. Workers of every land are looking to the Congress to put an end to the division in the international trade union movement. Its task in this direction is rendered easier by the inspiring successes of the trade unions in France and Spain, where unity is achieved.

The problem of unification of the forces of labour on the international scale has always concerned Marxists. It is a difficult problem, for it involves co-ordination and mutual support in action, especially in the use of the weapons of strike and of blockade and refusal to transport. Trade union unity in its full significance would mean that the national divisions of the world-wide army of Labour would be co-ordinated by an international staff. The solidarity and refusal to blackleg, now well understood inside the countries, operates across the frontiers. No longer should we see for example a general strike of miners in one country while a neighbouring country works overtime to supply the market.

Within the working class are varied crafts, industries and groupings upon which capitalism knows how to play for its own ends, and its own ends are above all—keep the Labour Movement divided. The different conditions, the varied maturing of the Labour Movement in the different countries, adds to the difficulties at the same time that it stresses the urgency of achieving the power to act internationally.

The advance of Fascism, and the development of the Fascist aggression upon Abyssinia accompanied by the paralysis of the League of Nations due to the conflict of capitalist interests within it, have put the problem of international unity of action in a new way for Labour, It is now no longer a long-distance perspective of an ideal organisation. It is now posed as a supremely practical issue—either unity of action on the international scale or destruction on a national scale, for organised Labour.

There could be no greater encouragement to Hitler, Mussolini and Baldwin to go forward with their war plans than a new refusal of unity at the forthcoming I.F.T.U. session. There could be no greater inspiration to the working class to hurl down Fascism and bar the way to war than the news that at last international unity was achieved.

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The main division—between reformist and revolutionary—in the trade union movement dates from 1914.

In the First International of Marx and Engels, both political parties and trade unions took part. The end of that International marked also the end of the first attempt to unify the trade unions internationally.

In 1902 an international secretariat of trade unions was formed, with functions only extending to exchange of information. The trade unions sent their delegates to the Congresses of the Socialist International. Industrial internationals, consisting of federations of particular trades or industries, began to function in a limited way, until before the war there were some 20 of them.

In 1914, however, the international position of the Trade Union Movement was very weak. Out of the 16,000,000 trade unionists only 10,000,000 could be said to be in class trade unions, the remainder were in various forms of religious, company and even government, organisations. Apart from North America and some white peopled countries of the British Empire, trade unionism remained confined to Europe.

The great betrayal of 1914 extended also to the trade unions whose leaders lined them up behind the national flags in all countries and converted them into munition making and recruiting machines for imperialism. The unions of the Entente countries held a conference of their own at Leeds in 1916. Attempts made by the trade unions of the neutral countries to re-establish contact between the trade unions of the Entente and the German countries were refused.

Here was clearly shown that class collaboration—the policy of supporting one's own capitalist government—is the irreconcilable enemy of internationalism. There can be no real international solidarity and certainly no international action while this policy dominates within the trade unions.

The governmental agent character of the leaders was shown again when they visited Russia in 1917. Both British and French trade union leaders were sent by their Governments with one object—to keep the Russians in the war.

In spite of various forms of rank-and-file revolt during the war, the reformist leaders maintained complete domination over the trade union machine. Consequently when the first reconstitution of the International was attempted after the war, it bore within it strongly conflicting national groupings corresponding to the policies of the imperialist governments. The first meeting in Berlin in February, 1919, and the subsequent foundation Congress of the present International Federation of Trade Unions (I.F.T.U.) in July, 1919, in Amsterdam, were dominated by the efforts of the Entente trade union leaders to compel an admission of war guilt from the German leaders !

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But the Russian Revolution was not the only success the working class had during the war. The degree of organisation increased rapidly. The rise of powerful unions in Russia was accompanied by the growth of trade unions in India, China, Japan and throughout the East, while all the old capitalist countries witnessed great increases. Britain rose from 4 millions in 1913 to 8,800,000 in 1919 ; Germany from 3 millions to 9 millions ; the United States from 2,700,000 to 5 millions ; France from under a million to over 2½ millions. The total number of organised trade unionists in 1920 could not have been less than 35,000,000. The working class had doubled its organised strength during the war.

But the newly formed I.F.T.U. was prevented from seizing the chance to unify these great forces by the fatal class collaboration policy which set its face against the Russian Revolution, against the colonial people's movements, and against the revolutionary movement in Europe. The Russian unions were not invited, on the contrary were slandered by groups of Mensheviks admitted to the International's discussions. No attempt was made to get into touch with the East or to send experienced organisers to build the unions there.

Consequently the London Congress in 1920 which laid down the foundation of the I.F.T.U. was a Congress of Western and Central Europe. Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Czecho-Slovakia, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland and Canada were represented. The only country outside Europe was a British Dominion. And this fundamental character of the I.F.T.U. has been retained ever since ; only a few white trade unions in the colonies have been added.

The I.F.T.U. thus came into existence at a time when the second great betrayal of the working class was being carried through. In spite of the fact that their official machinery was in the hands of leaders turned cabinet ministers, the workers of all the warring countries inspired by the Russian Revolution surged forward in a great movement in the post-war years. Many temporary concessions were gained, including the Weimar Republic in Germany, but capitalism was not overthrown. And the trade unions everywhere were used by the ruling groups of leaders to turn aside and dissipate the forward surge of the working class.

Consequently the resolutions and decisions of the 1920 Congress of the I.F.T.U. bear a contradictory character. In words they are fiercely if vaguely anti-capitalist. It was necessary to speak so, to retain the attention of the workers. But the words were not accompanied by any action, or rather what action there was went contrary to the words.

The 1920 resolutions declared, amongst other things, that :

> We must . . . fight against the growth of international reaction which is threatening the very existence of the trade unions. . . . Congress favours the application of the weapons of mass strikes and boycotts

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> and calls upon all workers to declare war upon war and fight for the realisation of the new social order.
>
> The struggle of the international organised working class against war must not be mixed up with the pacifism of the capitalist bourgeoisie.

On the question of the fight to regain or establish the 8-hour day the Congress threatened—

> We will no longer render to the International Labour Office the support of the Trade Union Movement if the Washington Conference decisions are not ratified within a definite period.

Discussing the remedies for the apparently not incurable tendency of capitalism to go to war, the Congress demanded from the I.L.O.

> the formation of an International Bureau for the assignment of raw materials.

Dealing with Socialism the Congress boldly declared that it did not hold with those people who understood socialism as meaning capitalist state control of industry, but that it stood for socialisation which meant

> active participation of society in control over production through the medium of the trade unions and their representatives.
>
> It accordingly called upon the workers to strive for this end with all their economic and political might . . . with all means in our power.

At the same time as passing such resolutions the trade union leaders were aiding the capitalists in all countries to defeat the workers. In Germany they helped to crush the Spartacus revolt and the subsequent movements ; in Britain they betrayed the miners on Black Friday and thus opened the way for the great capitalist offensive.

The formation of the I.F.T.U. and its use of socialist phrases thus represented the establishment of a centre which could encourage and foster the growth of reformist illusions and thereby prevent the mass movement falling under the leadership of revolutionary forces. The I.F.T.U. strengthened the hands of the national trade union leaderships in doing this work and lent them the authority of internationalism. The I.F.T.U. never attempted to examine the strategy of the " weapons of mass strikes and boycott " ; its whole practice was to lead the trade unions on the path of parliamentary action with capitalist approval.

At the same time that capitalism and reformism were thus consolidating their centres for confusing the trade union movement, the revolutionary working class was setting up a centre for class solidarity and enlightenment. The Red International of Labour Unions (R.I.L.U.) was founded in Moscow in 1920 and held its first Congress in 1921.

The main base of the R.I.L.U. was the Russian trade unions. The syndicalist organisations of France and Spain, the Italian Confederation of Labour, a number of Balkan trade unions and most important of all the young trade union movement of the East rapidly rallied to it. Its

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organisational relation to the I.F.T.U. and the comparison of their respective strengths became complicated by the fact that a growing minority of the membership of the I.F.T.U. itself came forward in support of the R.I.L.U. policy. For example, the British Minority Movement, founded in 1924, adopted the platform of the R.I.L.U. and secured representation of a million British trade unionists at its conferences.

The R.I.L.U. became in striking contrast to Amsterdam, a centre of world-wide activity and fiery energy and discussion. It immediately paid great attention to the East and to South America, and its work there greatly aided the youthful trade unions. Its delegations and organisers went to China, India, Indonesia, and elsewhere in spite of the repression. It extended the hand of brotherly solidarity to the growing colonial movements at the very moment when the I.F.T.U. gave them a cold shoulder.

The foundation Congress of the R.I.L.U., again in contrast to that of Amsterdam, laid down in clear language that the establishment of working class power was the central aim of the trade unions. This thought dominated subsequent discussions of strategy and tactics, in which the R.I.L.U. strove ceaselessly to rally, to strengthen and clarify the class forces of the workers.

Throughout the subsequent years the R.I.L.U., therefore, counteracted the centres of reformist illusions by radiating throughout the trade union movement all over the world the principles, strategy and tactics of class struggle.

But by the time the R.I.L.U. was founded the post-war revolutionary wave was already on the ebb. Already in the face of the capitalist offensive it became urgently necessary to close the ranks in the struggle to preserve the gains of the working class. Therefore the R.I.L.U. from the start put forward the proposal for a united front with the I.F.T.U. in the daily struggles against capital.

This slogan found increasing response within the ranks of the I.F.T.U. The formation of the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee in 1924 was followed by a considerable left wing development in the I.F.T.U. around the question of admitting the Russian unions. But the I.F.T.U. leadership only formulated decisions which sought to impose on the Russian unions the acceptance of the line and class collaboration policy as a preliminary to admission. The I.F.T.U. leadership refused to discuss the R.I.L.U. at all, and demanded that it be dissolved and all trade unionists re-enter the I.F.T.U. By this formulation it attempted to conceal the fact that in Germany, Austria, Belgium, and later in Britain, decisions were being taken to expel supporters of the R.I.L.U. or to take away the right of the membership to elect them to office.

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The conflict inside the I.F.T.U. became sharper. The betrayal of the British General Strike in 1926 marked a decline of the left wing and was followed by a new period of intensified collaboration with the employers and the capitalist governments in rationalisation of industry. The results of this policy were so unpalatable for the membership of the unions that the reformists had to tighten up discipline and resort to dictatorial methods in order to prevent the membership electing R.I.L.U. supporters to the leading posts. In Germany there were thousands and thousands of expulsions.

It was in this period that the capitalists were driving through rationalisation in order to give themselves a new basis for a further round of intensified production and competition, entering on a similar cycle as had led to 1914.

The victory of Hitler in Germany in 1933 marked a stage on this road, the stage of open rearmament of German imperialism.

The victory of Hitler exploded among large sections of workers what was left of the reformist illusions which survived the period of rationalisation. The working class began a great overhauling of its whole ideas and position. It was now no longer a question of controversy between the I.F.T.U. and the R.I.L.U. as to which way the working class should take ; it was now a question of uniting all working-class forces, whatever their differences in principle, to bar the way to Fascism. Unity now became the supreme objective of the R.I.L.U. and of great masses and many functionaries of the I.F.T.U.

The R.I.L.U. in 1934 again appealed to the central organ of the I.F.T.U. for a united front, and reinforced this effort by the devotion of all forces in the respective countries to secure unity on an all-national scale.

The Weymouth (1934) and Copenhagen (1935) meetings of the I.F.T.U. repulsed these offers and repeated their demands that there should be unconditional dissolution of the R.I.L.U. and the revolutionary trade unions everywhere.

But the demand for unity had now begun to seize on the masses and an irresistible movement commenced. It found its greatest expression in France where under the threat of a Fascist coup the whole working class closed its ranks. In September, 1935, success crowned the years' long work of the Unitary Confederation of Labour (R.I.L.U.), and the reformist leaders agreed to fusion. Fusion was accomplished and ratified early in 1936, accompanied by a stream of new members which grew into a flood with the coming of the parliamentary majority of the People's Front in May. Last September the membership of both Federations was under 900,000. In April it was 1,500,000, and in June it had passed the 2,500,000 mark.

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The fusion in France was a merger " without victors or vanquished." It was effected on the base of democracy within the unions, and on the principles of class struggle. There was no bar or discrimination against the election of Communists or ex-members of the C.G.T.U. to office in the united Confederation. Two such members were elected to the new Executive Bureau. Unity in France therefore represented a signal defeat for the diehard reformists in the I.F.T.U. who wanted the suppression of the Communists and the policy of class struggle.

The united Congress of the French trade unions decided to affiliate to the I.F.T.U. but accompanied this by a declaration favouring international unity.

Therefore in 1936 the world trade union movement presents a completely different picture to that of 1920. Reformism and class collaboration have gained only discredit during the 16 years they have dominated the trade unions. The German unions, backbone of reaction inside the I.F.T.U. are destroyed by the victory of Hitler, which their policy of split and surrender made possible. In Germany, Italy and many Balkan countries the trade unions are reduced to illegal groups. In Austria the illegal trade unions are mass bodies.

In China the All-China Labour Federation, a pillar of the R.I.L.U. is also underground and its mass organisations destroyed, except in Soviet China where it is powerful. In India the red and reformist unions are uniting.

In France, Spain and Poland the R.I.L.U. sections have entered the unified unions. In Germany, Austria and Italy supporters of R.I.L.U. and I.F.T.U. work side by side in rebuilding the illegal Free trade unions.

Organisational divisions between I.F.T.U. sections and R.I.L.U. sections continue only in Greece and Czecho-Slovakia. In Spain the powerful Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation has begun negotiations with the unified red and reformist centre.

The Russian unions tower above everyone with their 20,000,000 members.

Trade union unity is therefore already on the march. The majority of the R.I.L.U. supporters are already, apart from the U.S.S.R., in the I.F.T.U. The total number of trade unionists in the world is greater than ever; there is a firm basis for a united trade union International.

From a review[1] of the trade union centres (with figures of membership where available) on the eve of the I.F.T.U. Congress in London, the unification of the movement in Europe is clearly the key to a world-wide advance of trade unionism. Completing the unity between the two Internationals now presents itself as the following tasks :—To invite the

[1]See Appendix at the conclusion of this article.

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Soviet trade unions to enter the I.F.T.U. ; to complete unity in the smaller European countries, to approach the trade unions of the East, of North America, of South America and of Australia to enter the unified International, to launch a great campaign in the colonies for building trade unions everywhere.

The immediate link in this chain is to bring the Soviet unions into the I.F.T.U. Here important conferences, including the distributive workers, have gone on record for this, while the miners have already invited the Soviet miners into their industrial international.

An invitation to the Russian unions to enter would signify the extension of the process begun in France to the whole I.F.T.U. It would bring a revival and a renascence on an international scale of the type we are seeing in France.

That is the responsibility which rests on the coming London Congress.

There need be no illusions. Powerful forces are at work in the I.F.T.U. against unity as well as for it. At the moment Citrine is leading the fight against unity. Why does this instigator of the Black Circular set his face so obstinately against the unity being demanded by the majority of the I.F.T.U. ?

Because he and his followers continue the policy of class collaboration. Soaked in capitalist ideology, haunted by the memory of 1926, they seek above all to steer the trade unions in the wake of British Government policy and to avoid a conflict with capitalism. The British Government is not trying to strengthen those forces of which the People's Front and the Soviet Union are an expression ; on the contrary it is seeking to strengthen Hitler and Mussolini, the forces of Fascism.

That is the dilemma for the Citrines. To admit the Russians, to establish unity, means an affront to the British Government and means unleashing forces which will bring about new conflicts with the Government, perhaps open the way to an early governmental crisis and a new Labour Government. But to continue on their present line means helping the National Government to help Fascism.

Mass pressure will decide the issue with Citrine as it decided Jouhaux. Let all the forces in British trade unionism, which want to end Mondism and the Black Circular and press forward for higher wages and better conditions as a united movement, take advantage of the I.F.T.U. session to increase the demand for unity.

In this way can be realised the objective formulated on behalf of all workers desiring to bar the road to Fascism by the champion of the anti-fascist forces, Dimitrov :—

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We stand for one International of Trade Unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capital and Fascism. Our only condition is :—Struggle against capital, struggle against Fascism and for internal trade union democracy.

APPENDIX

EUROPE :

Austria	No. unknown*	Great Britain	3,400,000*	Norway	170,000*
Belgium	570,000*	Greece	73,000*	Poland	240,000*
Czecho-Slovakia	600,000*		30,000†	Portugal	20,000‡
	150,000†	Holland	300,000*	Roumania	44,000*
Denmark	350,000*	Hungary	111,000*	Spain	1,100,000*
Esthonia	6,000*	Ireland	100,000		1,000,000‡
Finland	27,000*	Italy	No. unknown*	Sweden	650,000*
France	2,600,000*	Lithuania	1,000*	Switzerland	220,000*
Germany	No. unknown*	Luxembourg	10,000*	Yugoslavia	32,000*

U.S.S.R. (including Asia) .. 20,000,000†

AMERICA :

Argentine	82,000*	Chile	150,000	Peru	25,000
	30,000‡		50,000†	Porto Rico	18,000
Brazil	20,000	Cuba	50,000	Salvador	10,000
Canada	103,000*		16,000†	United	
	24,000†	Mexico	1,800,000	States	3,300,000
Colombia	10,000	Paraguay	8,000	Uruguay	28,000

In the remaining countries the situation is obscure. Most of the South American centres have had at some time relations with the Latin American Trade Union Confederation, which sympathises with the R.I.L.U.

ASIA :

Ceylon	114,000	India	200,000*	Japan (several	
China	No. unknown†	Dutch E. Indies	24,000*	centres)	300,000
		Philippines	50,000†	Palestine	67,000*

AFRICA :

Algeria	10,000*	Egypt	60,000	South Africa	5,000*
					40,000

AUSTRALASIA :

Australia .. 900,000 New Zealand .. 100,000

*Signifies affiliated to the I.F.T.U.
† ,, ,, ,, R.I.L.U.
‡ ,, ,, ,, Anarcho-Syndicalist International.
When no marks follow the figures the centres have no international affiliations.

WORLD TOTALS OF MEMBERSHIP.

Approximate World Total of Trade Unionists (excluding Germany, Austria, Italy, China, etc.)	39,400,000
Total affiliated to the I.F.T.U.	11,700,000

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THE EVENTS IN PALESTINE

By BRITISH RESIDENT*

IN most accounts of the Palestine disturbances which I have read in the English press, even in those sections of the press which do not normally blatantly champion imperial interests, the picture drawn has been one of Arab hooligans and bandits, hired with Italian gold (or German or Russian, according to the particular political point of view), instigated by self-interested Arab politicians ("effendis"), attacking the lives and property of peace-loving Jews, whose only object is to develop the country economically in the interests of the Arabs, while the British Government, anxious only to do the decent thing by both Arab and Jew, tries with a gentle hand (too gentle, that friend of oppressed races, the *Times*, thinks) to restore order.

This picture, if it were true, would be unintelligible ; which is a good *a priori* reason for believing that the picture is untrue.

The three main falsehoods which seem to recur in almost every account of these disturbances are :—(i) that the disturbances have no political justification ; (ii) that they are the result of instigation ; (iii) that the Government uses gentle methods to repress them.

I.

Articles about the disturbances appearing in the press always leave out their political background altogether ; the disturbances are represented as occurring in a political vacuum. What is their real context ? The Palestine Arabs, who were induced to desert from the Turks to the British during the last war with promises of freedom, have for the last eighteen years endured an undiluted British autocracy. The whole legislative and executive power in Palestine is concentrated in the hands of a British High Commissioner who carries out the instructions of the British Cabinet. The latter is nominally responsible to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, which exercises a largely fictitious supervision over the administration of the Palestine Mandate. Like other mandated territories, Palestine is for all practical purposes (except from a tariff point of view) a Crown Colony. There is no vestige of self-government, less even than in the most backward

*The writer of this article has lived in and been closely acquainted with Palestine for some years.

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African colonies. There is no contesting the fact that all the really responsible posts are held not by the Palestinians themselves (whether Arabs or Jews) but by Englishmen. A legislative council of the normal colonial 'concealed official majority' type was offered by the British and refused by the Arabs in 1922, and again proposed and withdrawn in 1929. A legislative council of a similar type was offered by the present High Commissioner in December of last year. This council was to be composed on a community basis and to consist of five official members, eleven nominated unofficial members (three Moslems, four Jews, two Christians and two 'Commercial') and twelve elected members (eight Moslems, three Jews and one Christian): the Christians would presumably be Arab Christians. If the relative weights of the British and Zionist elements and of the Arab element are compared (this would be likely to be the actual line of cleavage over any major political issue), it is clear that the British and pro-British forces (five officials, seven Jews and two 'Commercials') would, with the casting vote of the senior official member, be stronger than the forces representing Arab interests (eleven Moslems and three Arab Christians), even at the most favourable estimate. The council would moreover be rendered finally clawless by the fact that money bills, the annual budget and the twice-yearly labour immigration schedules would be outside its scope, and that the High Commissioner would have emergency powers to pass legislation without the council's consent and to postpone the holding of elections for more than twelve months after the council's dissolution. The effect of the establishment of this council would be that British colonial policy might sometimes be impeded but could never be actually thwarted. The institution of such puppet councils is favoured by the British Government, as they are powerless to harm British interests and at the same time provide a useful safety valve for anti-imperialist feeling. Such a piece of machinery would be useless either to carry on the struggle for ultimate Arab independence or to realise their day-to-day needs.

What the Arabs have got then is British autocracy, and the prospect of its continuance for an indefinite time. What is it that they want? Principally they want what any victim of imperialism wants—to be rid of imperialist control and of a policy directed in imperialist interests. But this desire has become complicated by the fact of Zionism, which, though in reality a British colonising movement, tends to be seen by the Arabs as a separate act of aggression, separable from British policy generally, for which the Jews and not the British are responsible. Instead of seeing Zionism and British policy as a single enemy, Arabs tend to regard Zionism as their first enemy and British policy as their second; their resistance to both becomes more ineffective in consequence. Some simple-minded Arabs even think, or used to think before these

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disturbances, that British rule in Palestine would be unobjectionable if it could be purged of Zionism. Up to the present the struggle against Zionism has dominated and obscured the struggle against British rule.

The degrees of importance which the Arabs attach to these two aspects of the same struggle is manifest in the three demands for the satisfaction of which the present strike is being carried on. They are :—

(i) the immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration ;

(ii) the introduction of legislation to prevent further sales of land by Arabs to Jews ;

(iii) the setting up of a responsible national government.

The condition of calling off the strike is the satisfaction of the first of these demands only. The Arabs would then be prepared to negotiate in regard to the other two. The main point of the first two demands is that, unless they are granted, the Arabs will finally lose the power to struggle for the granting of the third. They are never likely to be able to achieve political independence if they are once dominated politically by the Jews. The effect of such domination would be to give the British an irresistible bulwark in Palestine which would be likely to block successfully all efforts of Palestine Arabs to obtain independence. Economically the Arabs are already dominated by the Jews who control the country's industries and share with the British control of its finance. Numerically the Arabs are in danger of becoming dominated : the present strengths of the two communities are roughly 900,000 Arabs to 375,000 Jews : the total Jewish immigration over the last three years (1933-35) has been about 150,000. As regards land, the prospect of Arab domination by Jews is more remote. At present Jews own only about 300,000 acres out of an officially estimated total of rather more than 3,000,000 acres of cultivable land in the country : but the area owned by Jews consists for the most part of plain land and is some of the most fertile in the country. The steady sale of lands is moreover turning a large number of Arab cultivators into proletarians, with the insecurity of livelihood which is bound to be the fate of proletarians under capitalism.

It is not difficult to see that if the Jews, who already control the economic life of Palestine and have a secure footing on the land, once become numerically in a majority they will become politically dominant. Then good-bye to any hopes of an independent Palestine.

It is not Jewish immigration *per se* or the sale of lands to Jews *per se* against which the Arabs are struggling but against immigration and the sale of lands controlled, or left uncontrolled, by the British Government in the interests not of the native population but partly of world Zionism, partly of Great Britain's trade and strategic interests in the Near East, to the frustration of Arab desires for independence.

* * * * *

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The cause of the present disturbances is that the Arabs have now reached a point which almost all victims of imperialism are bound to reach sooner or later, when it becomes clear that it is impossible by methods of negotiation and petition to move a step further in the direction of independence, and that more effective measures must be used or the struggle abandoned. No sensible man likes violence. But equally no sensible man can pretend that imperialist governments, blindly pursuing their own interests, will not often give way on questions of colonial policy when violence is used and will not give way when peaceable methods are used. The present disturbances in Palestine are therefore unpleasant but reasonable.

Why it should have been meritorious in Lord Allenby to impose British rule upon Palestine by force in 1918 and wicked of the Arabs to use force now in order to take a step in the direction of getting rid of British rule is a question which only imperialists can answer. Those who now call the Arabs hooligans and bandits should remember the acts of hooligan Allenby and bandit Lawrence.

The following events, occurring shortly before the present disturbances, had influence in causing them to happen at the time at which they actually happened.

(1). After eighteen years of negotiation with the British and Palestine Governments the Arabs were at the end of last year as far as ever from obtaining any control over their own affairs. Instead the tendency had been for British control to become tighter. In November, 1935, the titular leaders of the Arabs presented their three demands to the Palestine Government in the form of an ultimatum. It was generally understood that if the reply to these demands was unsatisfactory the Arabs would have recourse to other methods than negotiation. The reply was wholly unsatisfactory as regards the stopping of immigration, largely unsatisfactory as regards the checking of land sales, and instead of a responsible national government the Arabs were offered a castrated legislative council. It was clear that the Government would not budge from this attitude unless something drastic were done to budge it.

(2). Two recent examples, encouraging to the Palestine Arabs, of violence having been apparently effective in securing concessions from a colonial power which peaceful methods had failed to secure were the Cairo riots in December, 1935, and the Syrian strike in January and February, 1936. In both cases it was possible that the motives of the British or French Governments were simply to get order restored by the appearance of concessions which they were actually not prepared to grant: in that case the victories of the Egyptians and Syrians were apparent only and the struggle would have to start again. But at any rate the Egyptians and Syrians appeared to have gained something (at the date of

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writing it seems that the Syrians at least have really gained something) by violent methods, while the Palestine Arabs had obviously gained nothing by peaceful methods.

(3). Another event which moved the Arabs in the direction of violence was the parliamentary debates on the legislative council proposals. They constituted an absolutely convincing piece of evidence of the Zionist strangle-hold on British policy in Palestine, in which the Arabs had always believed. In these debates, which were fully reported in the Arabic press and closely followed by the Arab public, die-hard imperialists and labour pro-Zionists united to condemn any movement in the direction of giving any measure of independence to the irresponsible Arabs. The subsequent offer of an Arab delegation to London was regarded by many as the Government's first step in a planned graceful retreat from its legislative council pledges.

II.

As regards the second falsehood, the present strike is not the result of instigation, either by foreign agents or by local agitators. Doubtless Italian agents do subsidize the strike and local agitators do agitate. But they are no more the causes of the present resistance to the Government than a sheet of paper is the cause of what is written on it. The strike is a spontaneous movement which has the support of almost all sections of the Arab people, the natural response to the Government's continued frustration of all peaceful efforts of the Arabs towards independence. Its character is plain from its origin. It started as a movement from below not from above, and it has been kept alive by pressure from below. Attacks by Arabs on Jews (made as an act of counter-reprisals) and the shooting of Arabs by the police in Jaffa on April 19th led to the outbreak of a strike in that town on April 20th. No strike had been planned by the Arab leaders: the shutting of shops was a spontaneous act. Strike action followed in Nablus on the same day and shortly after in other towns. By April 23rd the Arab shops in all the main towns except Tiberias were shut. In each town local strike committees were appointed by the people of the town to organise and maintain the strike and to arrange relief for the strikers. The pressure of these local strike committees, brought to bear on the leaders of the five Arab political parties, compelled them to form a Higher Strike Committee, to co-ordinate the activities of the local committees and to negotiate with the Government. It would be foolish to pretend that the members of the Higher Strike Committee are disinterested angels. Several of them would probably be ready to sell the strike, betray their followers and compromise with the Government if they had the chance: the same is true of many of the local leaders. But they have no chance. They are now being carried on the backs of the exasperated Arab people, who are determined that

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this struggle shall go on until either the Arabs get satisfaction from the Government or are broken by the Government.

At the beginning only the towns and the villages in the immediate neighbourhood of towns were implicated in the strike: now, a good deal thanks to the repressive action taken by the Government against villages, the villagers throughout the country are solidly behind the strike and behind whatever line of resistance to the Government the towns may decide to take. So far their action has consisted in contributing generously to relief funds for the support of workers and shopkeepers whom the strike has rendered out of work; attacks on Jewish property; and attacks on Government communications. In the hill country of Samaria numbers of villagers have obtained arms and have left their villages for the hills where they carry on what almost amounts to guerilla war against any detachments of British troops that they come across. If it were not that they are now occupied with the harvest the villagers would probably be more active in their resistance to the Government than they are. In a month when the harvest is over, if the strike still continues, it is likely that the villagers will participate more actively.

The present resistance to the Government is not confined to men: women and schoolboys and schoolgirls have initiated demonstrations and presented protests in many of the towns. Most of the boys and girls attending Government schools in the towns have gone on strike and the schools have been closed down in consequence. Village schools have followed their lead. British teachers have written shocked letters to the newspapers deploring the fact that the children whom they have trained to be nice little Anglophiles should now show a cloven hoof. It is such a pity, they say, in the children's own best interests that they should spoil their chances in the forthcoming summer examinations.

The methods by which a subject people can put pressure on a great colonial power with almost unlimited military resources are restricted. The Palestine Arabs have hitherto had no training in these methods and have learned no technique. They are, moreover, naturally a peaceful-minded people. The villagers enjoy talking politics, but it goes against their grain to disturb the normal course of their lives in order to take violent action for a political end. Nothing but the blindly self-interested policy of British imperialism could have driven them to behave as they are now behaving. In spite, however, of their lack of training in methods of resistance and their natural unaggressiveness the Arabs have so far during these disturbances shown imagination and courage. In addition to the general strike, now in its sixty-first day, the Higher Strike Committee, under pressure from the people, has proclained civil disobedience. This has so far taken the form of a general refusal to pay to the Government both the ordinary urban and rural taxes and the extraordinary fines and punitive exactions which the Government has imposed in the

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course of these disturbances. The value both of the strike and of civil disobedience is principally their protest value. They have a subsidiary value in that they put pressure on the Government by depriving it of a considerable amount of revenue. Arab Municipal Councils are already on strike, and, far more important, Arab Government officials and Arab police (who naturally resent being required to take part in repressive activities against other Arabs) have been considering joining the strike front. Among sections of both officials and police there is already strong feeling in favour of doing so. What chiefly deters them is: (1) that a strike, to be effective, would have to be unanimous or nearly so; (2) that for them to strike might well involve the permanent loss of their livelihoods; for shopkeepers and most town workers on the other hand the loss is likely to be only temporary; (3) that Government officials as members of the middle class, have a traditional dislike of taking part in strike action.

Should a strike of Arab officials and police actually take place the whole machinery of civil administration would break down and the Government would be paralysed. It would then presumably have no alternative but to yield to Arab demands or to govern the country by a complete, instead of as at present a partial, military dictatorship.

III.

Finally there is the lie, possibly the biggest lie of all, that the Government has dealt gently with the disturbances. In the early stages the Government remained, comparatively speaking, on the defensive. When demonstrations took place and refused to disperse they were broken up with baton charges, and in some cases (in the towns of Jerusalem, Haifa, Acre, Nazareth and Jenin at least) with shooting. Several hundred Arabs were arrested for taking part in disturbances, for stone throwing and for picketing shopkeepers who kept their shops open. Savage sentences were inflicted by the courts: seven years for a man in a demonstration who wounded a British constable with a knife (how much lighter would the sentence have been if the constable had been an Arab); three years for throwing stones at the police; boys caught picketing were lashed. Numbers of people (including a large number of Communists) suspected by the police of being likely to be a danger to the peace if left at large, were kept in prison on remand without a trial. In some cases those arrested were beaten illegally. Heavy collective fines were imposed upon Arab villages and tribes believed to have been responsible for attacks on Jewish or Government property and, when they refused to pay the fines, their goods were seized.

In about the middle of May the High Commissioner decided that the measures so far taken were not severe enough to break Arab resistance.

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A Government offensive was therefore launched of which the two principal lines of action were : (a) the confining (without a trial) of political leaders to specified towns and villages, (b) the carrying out by the military or police or both of punitive raids against villages suspected of acts of damage or arson. The first of these measures hurt the Government more than it hurt the political leaders since the latter usually succeeded in intensifying anti-Government feeling in the towns and villages to which they were deported. The Government, realising its mistake, has now changed its policy and has started a concentration camp with accommodation for a hundred Arab politicians at a place called Auja el Hafir in the Beersheba desert. A second concentration camp with accommodation for two hundred and fifty, is reported to be in course of construction at Sarafand, near Ramle. District authorities have power to order any person to be confined in a concentration camp, and if he escapes from the camp to be imprisoned, for any period up to one year—in both cases without a trial.

The Government has shown itself at its most brutal in the military raids against villages. These raids are described by the Government as " searches," since their supposed purpose is to search for arms, which are actually almost never found : any villager who has arms has already left his village and gone into the hills. Although Martial Law has not been declared the troops (which have now been increased by reinforcements from the normal garrison of two battalions to eight battalions, in addition to units of the Air Force and tanks, are allowed a practically free hand in the carrying out of a raid, at which frequently no civil authority is present. In two cases raids have been accompanied by the shooting and killing of innocent people. Others have been beaten. Cupboards are broken open, flour and oil upset, clothes and mattresses slashed and destroyed : money and jewellery has been looted by the soldiers. In the case of one tribe tanks rode over their tents ; all their personal property was destroyed, and their animals, on which they chiefly depended for a livelihood, killed. Up to the present not less than thirty of these raids must have been carried out in different parts of the country. Their effect on the villages in which they have taken place and in the neighbouring villages which have heard of them has been to intensify the villagers' hatred of the Government and to strengthen their will to resist.

When it was found that these measures were ineffectual to crush resistance the Government tightened the screw. The most recent measures of repression include certain " Emergency Regulations " : (1) empowering district authorities to force strikers to open their shops ; (2) imposing the death penalty for shooting at a policeman or throwing a bomb (if it is done with the intention of assisting armed rebels), or for damaging or interfering with Government communications (if the act is one likely to

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endanger life), otherwise life imprisonment in both cases ; (3) giving the Government power to confiscate and destroy any house " situated in any town, quarter, village, or other area where the inhabitants have committed, aided or abetted any offence involving violence or intimidation, even though the actual offenders are unknown." This last measure is so wide in its terms that it almost amounts to giving the Government *carte blanche* to pull down all the Arab villages in Palestine.

All the Arab daily newspapers which are published regularly were recently suspended for a fortnight. At the date of writing only one is allowed to appear and its comments on local events are strictly controlled. Every week fresh inroads are made on civil liberty. Over 1,300 Arabs have been imprisoned in the last two months for offences connected with the disturbances. With the fair excuse that ' order must be restored ' the police and military are left free to bully the people almost without restraint. These are the gentle methods of the Palestine Government.

The contrast between England's attitude to Italy's treatment of Abyssinia and her own treatment of the Arabs of Palestine is one frequently pointed out by Arabs, with much justice. At a time when right-minded people in England are expressing their disgust at the successful conclusion of Mussolini's imperialist adventure in Abyssinia, and their contempt for the hypocrisy of Italy's gesture in ' liberating the Abyssinian slaves ' they might spare some of these feelings for the events of their own democratic empire. Palestine, like Abyssinia, was conquered in the course of an imperialist war. The act of aggression by which Palestine was brought within the British Empire, like the act of aggression by which Abyssinia was brought within the Italian Empire, was represented as an act of liberation, and for some time the Arabs of Palestine were compelled to observe the day on which Allenby marched into Jerusalem and their country was formally occupied by the British as " Liberation Day." The British and Zionists claim that they have brought ' prosperity ' to Palestine : the Italians are going to bring ' prosperity ' to Abyssinia.

You cannot have it both ways. Either it is just that Italy should annex Abyssinia by force in order that that country should serve the interests of Italian capital and Italian imperial strategy, and incidentally enjoy better roads and railways and a more efficient system of posts and telegraphs. Or it is unjust that England should have annexed Palestine by force, and should now be holding the Arabs down by force, to serve the interests of British and Zionist capital and British imperial strategy, and incidentally enjoy better roads and railways and a more efficient system of posts and telegraphs. You cannot eat your neighbour's cake and then look shocked when another fellow eats his neighbour's sugar biscuit.

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PROBLEMS OF TRADE UNIONISM IN 1936

[The following contributions are in continuation of the discussion which the LABOUR MONTHLY *opened in May*[1] *with an article by Arthur Horner, President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, on Trade Union Policy. The year* 1936 *sees the unions growing rapidly, but there is a lack of a progressive policy. How is this to be overcome? We invite our readers to contribute their views.]*

I.

By BERNARD SULLIVAN

(*Secretary, London Central Branch, National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers*).

THERE are numerous well meaning persons able to say why the Trade Union Movement has failed to organise the mass of workers outside the Unions. It is a stock argument that the older trade union officials are timid and more concerned in maintaining their membership than embarking on wider experiments. It is seldom stated that the Executives are mainly rank and file workers who are in close contact with workers in the workshops and who are elected, periodically, by popular vote.

Most of the suggested remedies are in operation in most industries and have failed for different reasons. The shops committees function in the Clothing factories, but have not achieved the result your previous writers prophesy. In the end, leadership does come from the permanent officials who are in close contact with the rank and file workers. It is obvious that the official can take steps that might jeopardise the job of an active steward. Therefore, my first suggestion to achieve the organisation of the workers is that we cease to sow distrust in the officials who have to lead the fight in the different industries.

The people who shout "United Front" are often, alas, the ones to sow disunity. In the past, too much emphasis has been laid on the general state of unemployment and this in turn has frightened the workers who before the slump were actively working inside the factories. Certain industries have little unemployment and this fact should be stressed.

Many workers are now paid by results and are not enthusiastic over hourly increases in wages. More emphasis should be laid on a shorter

[1]The contributions in the June issue were from J. R. Campbell and Gordon Hicks (*Typographical Association*). Copies of the May or June issues can be had for 7d. each from 7 John Street, W.C.1.

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working week, such as the 40-hour five-day week, but without loss of earnings. Holiday pay both for the annual holidays and the bank holidays should be demanded. Abolition of overtime, where possible, but at least regulation and control of overtime by the workers should be insisted on. Rest pauses between meal times are a popular demand, with facilities for a cup of tea or a smoke. Around these demands which are practical and can be won without much delay we should build up the shop organisation.

The ideal Trade Union is broad based. The Executive is the governing body working to rules laid down by elected General Conferences. The District Committee guides the branches, who in turn build up the shop organisation of stewards for the different departments co-ordinated by the shops committee leading the workers in the factory. If the Union is based on these lines no shop should undertake separate action without advice or instruction. Too many militant branches have crashed through the belief that one firm can advance without recognising its relations to other factories in the same industry.

The greatest difficulty the Trade Union Movement has to face is in the organisation of women. We need to put a bolder programme before them. Women seldom receive the benefits I have outlined, but their earnings are greater than the rates regulating their industries.

In the Clothing industry the Trade Boards fix minimums that are absurdly low in comparison with the earnings of the women, therefore there is a tendency to be satisfied with a rate that is higher than the Trade Boards rate. *Trade Boards women's rates are generally one half the rate of a man's wage.* The tendency is to employ women in place of men, therefore it would be foolish to go forward with a demand for higher rates for men unless it was accompanied with very much higher rates for women. A two-pound minimum for women is a practical proposition if it is allied to a 40-hour week, with payment for holidays.

More necessary than higher wages is the control of new operations, but this can be achieved if the workers are first organised on a popular programme and the shop organisation is perfected. Mr. Campbell's legal Factory Council is a dangerous proposition as, like legal minimums, it suggests weak organisation, and carries with it responsibilities to the firm or industry.

One of the most important links with the workers is the Trades Councils, which are frequently mixed up with the political side of the movement. Councils of Trade Unions should be in existence to foster propaganda on a broader scale, yet the Left opinion in London is fighting against the reorganisation of local Trades Councils, which are mainly centred round the Borough Councils and are dominated by public employees.

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These proposals are modest ones, but their purpose is to attract the workers into their organisations immediately, and to build up the machine to be ready for a further and more rapid advance in workers' control.

II.

By JAMES BARR

(*Member Executive Committee, United Patternmakers' Association*).

TRADE Unionism in the engineering industry has been quickened in its movement during the past year; the activity in engineering is primarily due to the imminence of war—a factor that ought to have the serious attention of every member of the working class.

Whilst the industry has absorbed many of the unemployed, and the demand for workers with a consequent working of long hours, there has been an easing of the harsh conditions of home life, there is still a danger that many of our comrades in the workshop will fail to realise that this revival in trade has a most insecure basis.

It is, however, encouraging to note that there are signs of dissatisfaction at the wages and conditions operating in certain shops ; but there is also the fear that bonus, piecework and overtime is in too many cases accepted by others as meaning an increase in the standard of life.

The expansion of the aircraft and motor car industry with the ever-changing design in engine and bodywork has given employment to many of our skilled artizans, and where rapid development in design and methods of production is desirable, such firms make attractive appeal to the energetic craftsman ; the supply and demand has been fairly well balanced. This has enabled firms to proceed with the rationing and specialising within their workshops and factories.

The influx to this field of engineering has been closely attended with trade union activities ; shop stewards have been alive to their work and the impetus given to the movement has been in many cases due to their vigilance and loyalty ; another influence which must not be overlooked is the number of spontaneous movements towards better wages and conditions.

These movements have been described as " unofficial " ; results have been fairly successful in the securing of some advantage for the workers, and at the same time there has been a consequent increase in trade union membership. To the leaders of such movements every credit must be given for their stimulating work ; arising out of such experience, the employers are beginning to learn their lesson, and believing that they can best resist the workers' demands by unity, some of them are now seeking the protective influence of the Employers' Federation—an organisation which knows the full value of the conciliatory machine.

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Those who are interested in the welfare of Trade Unionism must sense the restlessness of the members ; unofficial strikes and seemingly precipitate action must not be accepted as actions of disloyalty towards Trade Unionism, but rather must we realise that such movements take place because workers are convinced that the tempo of national negotiations does not harmonise with immediate demands. It would be folly to suggest that immediate improvement in the workshop can only follow unofficial action, but there is need for executive relationship and the man in the shop becoming much closer and more intimate with the actual conditions. It will be generally agreed that when the man in the shop makes a demand for an alteration in his condition of employment, it is seldom based on a condition of affairs that might be operating three or four months hence. The demand is invariably for the rectifying of a grievance immediately, and on the spot. Take the demand by the Engineering Trades in February of this year—a case which was presented very ably, showing the operation of the industry with its effect on the bank account of the employers and its effect on the lives of the people, figures and facts to prove the workers' case—yet more than two months later the employers return to say that they have carefully examined the figures but the result is different.

Protracted negotiations do not tend to stimulate the enthusiasm of the members, hence the need for speeding up of the negotiating machinery. But one cannot be too hopeful that any drastic change can take place unless the members have the will and determination to have such conditions established ; an alteration in the machinery would serve to eliminate the need for unofficial action. With smaller trade unions there is a more intimate contact with the members which reflects itself in more speedy action where need arises, and it is to be recorded that many trade unions have been encouraging in their attitude where this close contact is maintained.

Our concern must be to have the activities of all trade unionists so co-ordinated that the greatest value can accrue from their efforts. There has been a readiness on the part of many workers in different unions to recognise this principle, men and women as the occasion presented itself have given great service in proving the value of unity. Instances can be given where members of one union have lined up with their comrades of another union engaged in a dispute, the sympathetic members knowing that there was no promise of recognition for their support, but fully imbued by trade union principles ; this is a spirit which must be preserved and encouraged as such influence is of incalculable value in strengthening the morale of Trade Unionism.

There is also, unfortunately, the type of member who feels that he has been treated none too well through having to undergo a long term of

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unemployment. Now that work has come his way he intends making hay while the sun shines. He is prepared to accept all overtime that is offered, and in many cases where there is a limit operating he will overstep that limit and not disclose the fact to the shop steward ; economic insecurity, the demands of the home, etc., are the forces which encourage this type of member, and here much good influence can be and is used by the energetic shop steward to get more loyal and progressive attention for the movement.

The difficulties facing organisers are many, especially where there has been a new industry set up, but there can usually be found some militant unit who is prepared to give assistance in the organisation at such places, and it is encouraging to note the rapid growth in membership under such circumstances ; but increased membership and isolated action by a few enthusiastic workers does not adequately express the function of modern Trade Unionism.

The problems confronting trade unions now are such that rules, regulations, agreements and procedure cannot be dealt with as something apart from the policy of a Government.

Whilst it may be comforting to the individual to earn a livelihood even in the making of arms for private firms, there is the consciousness that their product can and will be used for the destruction of human life when the time arrives, and the knowledge that the workers have no power in the directing of a policy of Peace or War against another country makes it all the more necessary to perfect the trade union machine.

So long as leaders show a desire to receive honours and recognition from a Capitalist Government—and they, the Government, take care not to throw away honours where service has not been given—then the need for overhauling the means for regulating our working conditions will continue and increase.

There are many highly efficient men at the head of trade unions who are capable of taking their place in a progressive and modernised movement, just as there are many useful members who have played a silent part in the building up of Trade Unionism. There is great work ahead and when the urge is felt by the democratically elected leaders, a movement for greater security will commence and those who fail to interpret the temper of its membership can be replaced by earnest and capable workers.

The power of the workers in France is surely a great demonstration to this modern age of the real value of labour. Labour can be organised to create fabulous wealth for the few, and poverty and want for the many; but this lesson from France teaches us that labour properly directed can banish want and give happiness and plenty to the producers of wealth, yet this can only be assured when the workers own and control the means of production.

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III.

By TED HILL

(*London District Organiser, Boilermakers' Society*).

THE broad scope of Arthur Horner's contribution to the problems of Trade Unionism in the May LABOUR MONTHLY gives ample opportunity for discussion.

Anti-Communist Prejudice

The question of anti-communist prejudice is a very important subject, and one that needs every attention by the rank and file of all working-class organisations. It is not the rank and file who are responsible for this anti-communist prejudice ; on the contrary, they very much appreciate the earnest appeal of the Communist Party for unity. The people responsible for the prejudice are those full-time officials and representatives of the working-class movement who use their brain and cunning not in pursuance of the class struggle, but for their own personal aggrandisement. These same people realise that unity in the movement would be their undoing, as they would not be capable of withstanding the forcefulness of the Communist Party within the movement. This menace to working-class unity must be removed, and a step in the right direction would be to amend trade union rules to frustrate the various officials in electing themselves to their dictatorial positions. A "United Front" is imperative to stave off Fascism and War, and I would advise all workers to do their utmost to remove all officials who oppose this principle.

Militants and Rank-and-File Committees

The continued attempts to isolate militants and rank-and-file committees are difficult to understand. From a trade union standpoint they are the very bulwark of organisation, and without them trade unionism would be a fiasco. The very existence of rank-and-file committees indicates the bureaucratic domination within a trade union, and such domination can only be removed by a revision of union rules permitting the organisation of such committees. I have 31 branches in an area of 8,000 square miles to cater for, and were it not for the committees set up by my members in the various districts it would be impossible for me to know the real wants of the members. Militants and rank-and-file committees are the very essence of success, and personally, I would not be without them. Whenever the opportunity presents itself most trade union officials relate with pride the history of the Tolpuddle Martyrs—they inspire the worker to emulate the class consciousness of these grand old warriors ; but when the worker responds and becomes a militant, he is persecuted by his very tutor. Trade union officials who oppose militants should never relate

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the history of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, as the hypocritical intent is a betrayal of the militancy portrayed in this historical happening.

Rationalisation

The trade union movement seems to have lost the boat when rationalisation was enacted. The movement must be rationalised with industry, and instead of workers having to wait to make their complaints at the branch meetings they should be given direct access to their organisers. Arthur Horner is correct in his advocacy of strengthening the workshop basis of trade unionism, as it is in the workshop and not in the trade union branches that rationalisation can best be combatted. Since 1932 the London Boilermakers have been organised on a militant workshop basis and it has proved beyond doubt that organisation must be fostered along these lines. Instead of referring matters to branch meetings as in the past, straight-from-work meetings have been convened with every success. The straight-from-work meeting has a fourfold value, *i.e.* :

(1) That workers, who never attend their branch meeting, invariably attend these meetings mainly because they themselves are personally interested.

(2) That should any responsibility arise there is a tendency for such responsibility to be shared by all workers concerned, and not by the shop steward and shop committee.

(3) That the organiser in delving for information relative to the subject matter, often hears of other irregularities which can be corrected before maturity.

(4) That the organiser obtains first-hand information. This enables him to display more confidence when dealing with the employer.

It cannot be denied that thousands of trade unionists have never seen their organiser, and it is at the straight-from-work meeting that both organiser and worker get contact. This is very important, as it gives the organiser an opportunity of explaining the rudiments of the class struggle. It is in this way that many workers who have never taken an active interest in the movement become inspired.

The organisation of shop stewards, shop committees and the straight-from-work meetings are the only practical way of combating rationalisation in its various forms ; and as an incentive to get workers to take up the duties of shop steward or shop committee-men, union rules must be amended to make their position more secure.

Trade Union Organisation

This is a question that must be tackled in a broader sense than hitherto. There are far too many trade unions catering for the same class of worker,

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and this in itself is responsible for thousands of non-unionists in the various industries. The recent farce of clammering for members in the Aircraft Industry is sufficient to warrant some drastic reform. The whole trade union movement must be remoulded on the basis of one trade union to each group of workers.

This would mean the absorbing of over 200 trade unions into less than 20. This is a huge task all will agree, but with the help of trade union officials and not their hindrance, this problem would be an elementary one. Much could be said about this matter, but space will not permit.

Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing

The Boilermakers' Society, unlike many other organisations, is making very few new members. The reason is obvious ; during the depression they struggled through, catering for a large number of unemployed, and thousands are still waiting their opportunity to get back into industry. The following figures give some idea of the gruelling time the boilermakers have had during the past six years, and they also indicate that unemployed workers are desirous of maintaining their trade union status if given the opportunity.

January	Percentage Unemployed
1930	20
1931	38
1932	60
1933	64
1934	57
1935	48
1936	41
1936 (May)	33

Rationalisation, new processes and the " Coffin Ship " standard of shipbuilding and shiprepairing has had a deadly effect on the employment of all shipyard workers, and the following quotation from my " Coffin Ship " pamphlet indicates clearly the decay of the shipbuilding and shiprepairing industry in so far as the worker is concerned :

> In 1931 there were 358,000 insured workers in the shipbuilding and shiprepairing industry : in July, 1935, this number had been reduced to 157,230, and out of this number 64,268 workers (42 per cent. of the total registered in the industry) are unemployed. In its final analysis, over 200,000 workers have been driven out of the industry since 1921, and only 25 per cent. of the workers registered in the industry in 1921 are now in employment, and despite this colossal exodus of workers from the industry, thousands of shipyard workers have been on the industrial scrapheap for the past three, four or five years.

The shipbuilding and shiprepairing industry is tied up with the iniquitous " Avoidance of Disputes agreement," similar to that in the engineering industry, and the procedure for negotiating wages, etc., is similar to

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the infamous "York Memorandum." These agreements are a menace to organisation, and all workers should do their utmost to annul this machinery.

Shipyard workers throughout the country have expressed their disapproval of the recent agreement accepted by the Executives of the various unions. The clause contained in this agreement that no further application can be made within nine months is proof that the upper strata of trade union bureaucracy are desirous of collaborating with the warmongers. With the exception of the London Boilermakers not one trade union or section of a trade union took a vote for or against the acceptance of this iniquitous award. The London Boilermakers will not tolerate the acceptance of any agreement unless it has had the blessing of the rank and file. They rejected the recent award, but the employers paid the advance immediately it was due on the instructions of the Boilermakers' Executive. The London District Committee of the Boilermakers' Society will not recognise the award, and have made application for the complete restoration of the 1931 cuts. In support of this claim all piecework and overtime was abolished on May 12, and to date the workers are rigidly standing by the mandate given to their district committee. The engineers and shipwrights in London and other workers throughout the country are taking similar action, and I appeal to all shipyard workers to repudiate the recent agreement and fight for something worth having.

Whether the prospects for the immediate future are good or bad, every worker must line up determined to fight for better wages and conditions, remembering that every success is another nail in the coffin of capitalism.

IV.

By NORMAN WISEMAN

(*Committee Member, Manchester Branch of the Typographical Association*).

COMRADE Gordon Hicks in last month's LABOUR MONTHLY voices clearly the dissatisfaction and desires of the more class-conscious of the rank-and-file in the printing trade unions.

I am afraid, however, that it is wishful thinking that leads him to state that the tendency of the craft unions in the trade is to become industrial ones. On the contrary, the tendency of the executives has been to fight unemployment in our ranks by tightening up admission of members. Thus, an apprentice who has served his time in a non-society office, or who has had a broken or short period of apprenticeship, has more difficulty to-day in joining a craft union than he would have had before the war. It is regrettable that the unions are using these methods to reduce expenditure on unemployment pay, but it is nevertheless true. There is not,

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admittedly, in our own union the same sectionalism and parochialism of outlook that is evinced by the metropolitan unions, but whatever diminution of craft spirit there may be has certainly not been reflected in the rules or conduct of branch or national governing bodies.

I am in complete agreement with Comrade Hicks, however, that this spirit must be overcome if the fight against the employers is to be successful in these days of increased mechanisation and speed-up. It is very necessary, as he states, that work should be done which will weld together the unions in the printing trade, but it is also essential that this work should be done, not by dismissing with a few words the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, but by utilising it in the struggle for unity. It is this body which fixes the hours and conditions of work for the unions, and it is through this body that what little national unity of action there is has been achieved. At the same time, it is undoubtedly an organisation that can be used to hamstring the militants, and as Comrade Hicks rightly points out the clauses in our agreement with the employers regarding the use of the Joint Industrial Council machinery are harmful to the workers and should be fought against. A concerted fight, however, can only be made against them, and, indeed, against the whole vindictive 1926 agreement, through the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, whose officials are signatories to it. Democratised and made militant by the infusion of new blood (and driven into action by the more militant unions) it can and must be used in the fight against the employers and for the ultimate goal of complete unity. It can be made a national platform for this policy, and may well serve as the basis of a closely knit alliance of the print workers similar to that between the railway unions, though without their restrictive machinery.

Locally it is the duty of every militant to have formed in newspaper office or jobbing house a federated chapel embracing the members of all unions in the office. Through these bodies unity of action in the everyday struggle can be and is being achieved.

This is the line of action to fit the prevailing circumstances, and to help to change them ; and to cry for one industrial union without advocating these methods of achieving it is to isolate oneself from the struggle for the sake of a pious aspiration.

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PROBLEMS OF LABOUR POLICY

[*At the beginning of this year in view of the many issues arising out of the General Election in relation to the future of Labour policy the* LABOUR MONTHLY *decided to invite Labour M.P.s, Labour Candidates and others active in the Labour Movement to contribute their views. The following are a further series of the replies to this invitation : the names of previous contributors will be found at the conclusion.*]

I.

By H. EASTWOOD

(*Agent and Secretary, Bolton Labour Party, Member of Bolton Borough Council*).

IN the whole history of human thought there is nothing more pathetic than to witness the destruction of a beautiful theory by an awkward fact. Socialism is a beautiful theory to many ; Capitalism is an awkward fact to all. Unless the workers and their allies organise, intelligently and effectively to abolish Capitalism, Socialism will for ever remain a beautiful theory.

As one who has attempted to devote a lifetime to the work of organising advanced thought, and expressing it in terms of power, local and national, I feel that there are several things which require to be specifically considered. Mr. Palme Dutt has put his finger on the three fundamental points. In the first place I feel that the Labour Party is not merely a purely working-class party. While the doctrine of the class war still remains, I feel also that there is a war of ideas, that is, a war between those who believe in Socialism and those who do not. And this war may tend to cut right across preconceived notions. Just as I know a millionaire who calls his dog " Trotsky," so do I also know an unemployed man who is a perfect Tory. And the doctrine of Socialism tends to find friends to-day in unexpected places. That is one reason why the platform of the Labour Party should be broadened out much more than it is.

" Recruitment " therefore must inevitably take on a newer and infinitely more advanced form. " Democratisation " must also assume a changing structure. Take a minor illustration and a major. The Women's sections have an Annual Conference. They discuss policy, and this is considered by the Labour Party nationally. The League of

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Youth hold an Annual Conference, but their policy decisions have no status in the Party. In the large sense I offer the following major suggestion. The late Arthur Henderson once confessed to me that, if he had to organise the national Labour Party all over again he would confine it to individual membership locally and nationally. That means that every effort should be made to enrol trade unionists as individual members of the Party. Surely this would automatically abolish the power of the " block " vote and base the decisions of the movement on real live membership of the parent organisation. It would mean that local delegate meetings, instead of being composed of trade union delegates, with or without mandates, and individual members with power of presence and speech but minus power of motion or amendment or vote, would then become the actual voice of the rank and file in very essence. Let the Annual Conference be made up of delegations from local Labour Parties on similar lines and you will then get contact with actualities from every part of the country. There is provision in the constitution now for an approach to every trade union in the country to supply a list of names so that they can be approached with this object in view. Many local Labour Parties are doing this in a small way. It wants enlarging and stressing. With 8,000,000 Labour voters and say 5,000,000 individual members, parties should select their own candidates and pay their own expenses : another form of needed democratic expression.

With regard to " outside " organisations, I find members of the Party, including Cabinet Ministers, who speak occasionally on " joint " platforms, such as the League of Nations Union, Peace demonstrations, etc. If the Party does not decide to accept the affiliation of the Communist Party, which it cannot at present, or even the I.L.P., what is there to prevent joint action on common grounds ? The assailing of Fascism is but one illustration. Adverse legislation is another. Even general propaganda meetings could prove a third case on agreed subjects.

Finally, in the matter of Socialist legislation, I feel that, instead of trying to do something " practical " in Parliament, which means in effect bolstering up the present system, an organised national campaign for Socialist legislation would be a tremendous improvement. We may not get a Labour majority just when we would like, but once we got it, it would have a mandate it had never had before. Such subjects as land, finance, agriculture, a Municipal Authorities Enabling Bill, the 40-hour week, and associated subjects involving the gradual transference of industry from private to public control and ownership, would constitute an appeal we have never really had, and I am sure would prove an impetus to all concerned.

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By RICHARD BLAND

(*Member of Nelson Borough Council*).

MY chief anxiety, so far as Labour Party policy is concerned, is that I believe that policy, if it were adopted, either by the present Government or by a Labour Government, would inevitably lead to war. There are those in the Party who appear to believe that there are worse things than war ; I do not believe it.

This idea about punishing the aggressor, etc., simply doesn't work. We may punish his people—and ourselves—by slaughtering the innocent in thousands and even millions, but the aggressor will escape with his life and probably die in his bed. The Kaiser was not hung and David Lloyd George is still alive.

From one end of the world to the other the masses of the people are crying for peace. Where are the leaders and where is the movement which is to focus all this sound and healthy sentiment into an effective peace machine ? We look in vain for a Socialist Peace policy based on the Workers' Movement. The best we are offered is the belief that the League of Nations will function for Peace irrespective of the fact that it is controlled by those who hold like grim death to the capitalist order of society. We are constantly saying that war is inherent in the capitalist system which I believe to be true. If the Socialist Movement is dependent for Peace on machinery controlled by a war-producing economic and social system then its plight is sorry indeed.

This need not be so. The workers of the world are ready to taboo war if they are rightly and courageously led.

The policy of any Socialist Party should be to unite the workers—starting with those in its own country—in a flat refusal to murder the workers of other lands and a policy for operating such a decision in any hour of crisis should be elaborated and openly proclaimed. When workers kill workers it is never in the interests of peace and progress, but always for the purposes of the privileged classes, and at their dictation. This fundamental Socialist principle of working-class solidarity should be practised at home and preached both at home and abroad. Let it be hammered into the consciousness of mankind everywhere—workers and masters—that henceforth the power of the capitalist to defeat the workers by the device of war is at an end.

This, alas, is not being done by the Labour Party in this country. Official Labour is ready to send the youth of Britain to its death—in certain circumstances. It is assumed that the latest phase of war—the punishment of the aggressor—is going to be different from its predecessors.

Can we not see that in the event of war, whether it be ordered from Geneva by the League Council, or from our various capitalist cities, will

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be involved all the inhuman devilry that inverted science has placed at the disposal of perverted mankind? Can we not see that the purpose of a League Army would be to win the war, and if "the aggressor" used poison gas and kindred methods, the League would have to do the same or lose the war. The League of Nations killing the innocent populations with poison from the skies would surely be the crowning irony of human experience.

Fear of Mussolini and Hitler and their kind has blinded our leaders to the fact that it is by oppression and suppression that these dictators continue to rule. Our aim should be to unite in spirit with the oppressed peoples of Europe and the world and not act in such a way as can only lead them to feel that we are their enemies.

If the practice of war-resistance by workers refusing to fight each other is not a practicable policy and a sound basis for ultimate world commonwealth, how is international working-class solidarity ever to be achieved? It would take a very powerful system of reasoning to convince me that a man who is trying to mow me down with a machine gun or burn out my lungs with gas is acting in the interests of brotherhood and making a contribution to ultimate human happiness.

The way *to* peace is the way *of* peace; we cannot build the city of our dreams by proceeding to destroy that of which alone it can be built. Courage is no use on the battlefield of modern mechanised warfare. Have the courage to fight for your homes *at home* by fighting against war and rejecting its every attempt to engulf you, and demand a Party and leaders who believe in you and your fellow workers in other lands, rather than in a League controlled by our political and economic enemies.

III.

By GILBERT TREACHER

(*Member of Watford Borough Council*).

SO much has been written about the problems of Labour policy; much more has been spoken; and I am sure every live Socialist is continually thinking about this very wide subject.

As is natural in the Labour Movement, we all come to so many different conclusions from our thoughts, that it is difficult to express one's own thoughts without realising that before the ink is dry another comrade in the movement will be arguing that they are out of date.

Conditions locally, nationally and internationally, are changing so rapidly that we must school ourselves to believe nothing in this world is static, and the policy of the Labour Movement must continually change to meet the changing situations.

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The pugnacious will call this continuous changing of policy the inconsistency of opportunists. But I believe to win the workers for Socialism we must use topical arguments of the 20th century and not 19th century theories, which only educated historians really understand.

Our Labour leaders have joined with their opponents in denouncing Mussolini and the Italian imperialists for their destructive brutalism in Abyssinia during recent months.

Mussolini replies, Italy is only doing in the 20th century what England and France did in the 18th and 19th centuries. How kind he is not to mention what England is doing *to-day* in India and Palestine. Thousands of bombs have been dropped on defenceless Indians by British airmen this year, and it is only our police who are shooting the Arabs in Palestine. It is essential that we should not only know these things, but understand their meaning and their causes.

It is easier to understand the history and to trace the meaning of the actions of politicians, militarists and imperialists, of the past, than it is to understand what is happening to-day. Yet the policy of the Labour Movement can only be of use to the workers if it is absolutely in line with day-to-day conditions.

To apply such conditions to the policy of the movement requires the closest possible contact and association between our leaders and the workers.

Generally the workers are too parochial, and what is happening in their workshops, depôts and factories is seldom related by them to what is happening elsewhere. New schedules, new machines, new systems are often introduced without any complaint from the workers. It is often days or weeks before the trade union organisers are made aware of them, and they then have the task of removing what has become a serious menace to conditions. Under a capitalist state of society workers must acknowledge *every* new suggestion of the employers as a means to produce more profits, and they should organise a meeting at once to consider the proposals. Expert advice called in and a warning sent throughout the industry.

More serious attention should be paid to the financial and economic aspects of a policy adopted by the movement, so that, having adopted that policy, the movement would then be more consistent in applying it on every occasion.

For years the movement has been advocating a 40-hour week for workers in all industries without any reduction in the present weekly wages. It is pleasing to note some Labour majorities on Local Authorities are applying the policy of the movement. But in London, where Labour governs, many employees of the L.C.C. are still working a 54-hour week before

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overtime is recognised. Time after time a demand for a *48-hour* week has been turned down by Labour majorities. Is it fair to ask employers in competitive industry to apply a *40-hour* week without reduction in the present weekly wages if Labour majorities on Local Authorities are not prepared to apply even a *48-hour* week for all their employees ? In many Trade Union offices, too, a 40-hour week is not the rule.

Fascism must not be allowed to land in Britain, we are told. Has it not already arrived ?

What is the essential difference between Fascism and Socialism ? Both claim to stand for the authority of the State over private enterprise.

The Labour Movement must emphasise the importance of Workers' Control in all industries, or our Socialist ideas will be, and are being, cleverly moulded by the capitalists to introduce their trustification and fascist principles. What is the London Passenger Transport Board, the British Broadcasting Board, but examples of the beginning of the Corporate State in Britain ? Now we learn of a Labour majority on a Local Authority selling its municipal enterprise to a huge Development Trust.

We must defend our country against Hitler ! How often do the workers hear this warning of the warmongers ? How much country, how much property, do most of the workers own—to defend ?

We are told that in China the workers have not only the Japanese to fight, but also " the traitors within the gates." Have we not first to fight the traitors within our gates, too ? Those who are responsible for 2,000,000 of our fellow workers being unemployed, responsible for the poverty and misery amongst even those who are employed, and for the disgraceful humiliation of the working class—the men and women who produce and distribute the wealth of the country. Fascism in Britain will not be applied by Germans, nor Italians, but by the British capitalist class, and whilst we are crying out—keep out Hitler !—keep out Mussolini !—the British capitalist class are at present applying their theories.

Educate ourselves, educate others ;
Organise ourselves, organise others ;
Agitate ourselves, agitate others,
Consistently and persistently,
Locally, nationally and internationally
In ever-increasing numbers !

Then the crisis will come and the workers will be able to understand it, take advantage of it, and establish that new state of society which instead of making the rich richer and the poor poorer, will gradually lift the whole of the workers of the world to higher levels of real personal prosperity

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and happiness, and give security to all. That new state of society is called Socialism !

IV.

By L. FRANKLYN-VAILE

(*Chairman, Norwood Socialist League*).

AFTER the crushing defeat at the General Election of 1931, many of us were sufficiently optimist to anticipate a complete revision of the Labour Party policy ; we hoped that the theory of gradualism would be replaced by an effective policy of " Socialism in our Time." It was soon evident that the measure of success gained at by-elections was causing Labour leaders to visualise an early return to office, hence the programme was watered down in order to pander to the electorate. Nothing must be done to frighten the voters, the Labour Party must be respectable, so Stafford Cripps and others were bitterly attacked for endeavouring to present a realistic view of the problems facing a Labour Government. The policy of emphasising the non-revolutionary character of the Labour Party reached its climax when Labour leaders abjectly bowed to royalty at the Jubilee and then staunchly advocated the Government's foreign policy. No wonder the General Election was a sham fight ; an atmosphere of unreality permeated the contest, for a considerable section of the rank and file realised it was not a struggle for Socialism, but simply an effort to gain office, doomed from the commencement.

Considering the tragic results from four years of the " National " Government, the fact that the Labour Party only gained 154 seats was a terrible reflection on the leadership of the party. But far from realising the lesson of that defeat we now find so-called Socialists proposing that an even milder programme be adopted, that a " Popular Front " be formed with the Liberals whilst excluding the Communists.

Throughout the movement the most astonishing complacency prevails. Local Parties are in the hands of a few individuals, many whose sole ambition is to become a municipal councillor. Criticism is stifled as far as possible ; in one party a member of the Executive was subjected to such abuse because he refused to swear allegiance to the chairman (have we turned Fascist ?) that he resigned, the reason for the abuse was because he had joined the Socialist League ; shortly after a former secretary was expelled because he dared to offer criticism on a number of occasions. In the same party when the question of the affiliation of the newly-formed branch of the Socialist League was discussed, one member of the Executive said that they should ignore the application as the Socialist League were the Left Wing section of the movement. I am told that these are

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by no means isolated incidents. Throughout the country ardent workers for the Socialist cause are being steadily pushed into the background. The reactionary lead from Transport House is reflected in the reactionary attitude of many local parties. A subtle poison is being innoculated into many Labour officials, namely that " the bosses " are not such bad fellows after all. There is far too much of the friendly " hale fellow well met " atmosphere prevalent to-day, far too little of the uncompromising hostility towards our opponents, that makes a movement really formidable.

Is it any wonder that Fascism is gaining recruits when the ordinary individuals witness the inertia of the Labour Movement ? The movement is following the course that so many other causes have taken right throughout history. The early fire and enthusiasm, the energetic pioneering spirit is rapidly disappearing, our Parliamentarians are content to criticise aspects of the capitalist system without attacking the system as a whole, or advocating Socialism as the alternative.

There seem to be only two paths along which we can travel. Either the Socialist League must break away from the Labour Party and unite with the I.L.P. and Communist Party in forming a real " Popular Front " or all genuine Socialists must join the Socialist League and form a really effective Left Wing section with the object of securing control of the divisional parties and the trade unions. The first alternative offers many attractions, and if these three organisations are prepared to sink their differences, I feel convinced that this would prove a smashing blow to Fascism and would attract thousands who have Socialist sympathies but for obvious reasons have not attached themselves to any group. On the other hand, it is in many ways a tragedy to allow the Labour Movement with its formidable electoral machinery to be dominated by petty-minded officials. Consequently although the task of gaining control is a most difficult one, it is imperative that the attempt should be made and it may well be successful if the Left Wing section will unite under one banner. The movement must be cleansed of its slovenly morality and that can only be done by the revolutionaries.

The Socialist League realises that the Communist Party must be affiliated to the Labour Party at the earliest opportunity. But it also realises the bitter opposition prevailing amongst those who are supposed to guide the destiny of the Labour Movement, and feels that the application will not be granted until the control of the movement is in vastly different hands.

Unless one or other of these alternatives is adopted, the working-class movement will be placed in a very grave position for the first serious crisis will probably see the introduction of real Fascist measures. We have little time to make up our minds. I think every Labour official should be asked in the event of a capitalist war if he is prepared to bend all

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his energies towards achieving a proletarian revolution. If the answer is in the negative then every effort should be made to remove him from his post as he is obviously useless, indeed harmful to the working classes.

[Previous contributions by *David Freeman* (late Labour Candidate for Portsmouth, C.), *R. F. St. J. Reade* (Westbury), *E. Shearer* (Aylesbury), and *Professor G. E. G. Catlin* (Sunderland), will be found in the February issue; *Prof. Harold J. Laski*, *John Lewis* (Great Yarmouth), *W. H. Bennett* (Dover), and *D. W. Flanagan* (Editor "Rotherhithe Labour News"), in the March issue; *R. McKinnon Wood* (Harborough), *T. D. Smith* (Member, first E.C. of N.C.L.C.), *John Morris* (Gen. Secretary, University Labour Federation), and *Leonard Wells* in the April issue; *George Hicks, M.P.*, in the May issue; *Aneurin Bevan, M.P.*, *Rev. Richard Lee* (West Wolverhampton), *Councillor A. E. Turpin* (N.E. Bethnal Green L.P.), *G. D. Miller* (late chairman, Oxford University Labour Club) and *B. J. Chaplin* (Newport Labour League of Youth) in the June issue. A copy of each of these issues can be obtained from The LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1, for 7d. post free.]

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ENGELS AND DARWIN

LETTER TO LAVROV

[*The letter from Friedrich Engels to P. L. Lavrov, here published for the first time in English, has been specially translated and annotated from a facsimile of the original, kindly supplied to the* LABOUR MONTHLY *by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow.*]

London, 12th Nov., 1875.

My dear Monsieur Lavrov,[1]

Now that I have returned from a visit to Germany I have at last got to your article, which I have just read with much interest. Here are my observations upon it, written in German, as this enables me to be more concise.[2]

(1) Of the Darwinian theory I accept the *theory of evolution* but only take Darwin's method of proof (struggle for life, natural selection)[3] as the first, provisional, and incomplete expression of a newly-discovered fact. Before Darwin, the very people (Vogt, Buchner, Moleschott, etc.) who now see nothing but the *struggle* for existence everywhere were stressing precisely the *co-operation* in organic nature—how the vegetable kingdom supplies the animal kingdom with oxygen and foodstuffs while the animal kingdom in turn supplies the vegetable kingdom with carbonic acid and manures, as Liebig, in particular, had emphasised. Both conceptions have a certain justification within certain limits, but

[1]Peter Lavrovitch Lavrov (1823-1900), artillery officer and Professor of Higher Mathematics at the School of Artillery in Petersburg, joined (1862) the early revolutionary organisation " Land and Freedom " of the Narodniki—who looked to the *Mir* (peasant village commune) as the basis of Russian emancipation. His famous *Historical Letters* (1868-9), which raised history and social progress to the same level of importance as natural science and emphasised the vast debt owed by the intelligentsia to the peasants and workers, had an immense influence on the " To the People " movement of the young intellectuals, whose concern hitherto had been mainly with natural science and utilitarian theory. Lavrov, banished in 1866, escaped to Paris (1870), joined the First International, put his military knowledge at the disposal of the Communards (1871), came to London to get help for them and so met Marx and Engels. He declared himself a Marxist, but never shed the " psychological method " to which Engels here mildly refers. His approach was always from the standpoint of the subjective individual and his ethical ideas; his *Essay on the History of Thought* (1875) treats evolution as the evolution of thought. At this period he was editing the journal *Vperyod* (Forward, 1873-78), and aimed at conciliation between his followers and the Bakunists (" Lavrov's soft sawder " Marx called it) ; he estranged both sections, left the movement because he disapproved of terrorism, but returned (1881) to the Narodovoltsi and gave them active literary help from then onwards.

[2]The first and last paragraphs of the letter are written in French ; the rest is in German, excepting the two quotations from Lavrov's article, and a few phrases, which are in Russian.

[3]This parenthesis is written in English.

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each is as one-sided and narrow as the other. The interaction of natural bodies—whether animate or inanimate—includes alike harmony and collision, struggle and co-operation. If, therefore, a so-called natural scientist permits himself to subsume the whole manifold wealth of historical development under the one-sided and meagre phrase, " struggle for existence," a phrase which even in the sphere of nature can only be taken with a grain of salt, such a proceeding is its own condemnation.

(2) Of the three convinced Darwinists cited, Hellwald alone seems to be worth mentioning. Seidlitz is only a lesser light at best, and Robert Byr is a novelist, whose novel *Three Times* is appearing at the moment in *By Land and Sea*—just the right place for his whole rodomontade too.

(3) Without disputing the merits of your method of attack, which I might call a psychological one, I should myself have chosen a different method. Each of us is more or less influenced by the intellectual medium in which he chiefly moves. For Russia, where you know your public better than I do, and for a propagandist journal appealing to the bond of sentiment, to moral feeling, your method is probably the better one. For Germany, where false sentimentality has done and is still doing such enormous harm, it would be unsuitable, and would be misunderstood and distorted sentimentally. What we need is hate rather than love—to begin with, at any rate—and, above all, to get rid of the last remnants of German idealism and instate material facts in their historic rights. I should, therefore, attack these bourgeois Darwinists something after this fashion (and shall perhaps do so in time) :—

The whole Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence is simply the transference from society to animate nature of Hobbes' theory of the war of every man against every man and the bourgeois economic theory of competition, along with the Malthusian theory of population. This feat having been accomplished—(as indicated under (1) I dispute its unqualified justification, especially where the Malthusian theory is concerned)—the same theories are next transferred back again from organic nature to history and their validity as eternal laws of human society declared to have been proved. The childishness of this procedure is obvious, it is not worth wasting words over. But if I wanted to go into it further I should do it in such a way that I exposed them in the first place as bad *economists* and only in the second place as bad natural scientists and philosophers.

(4) The essential difference between human and animal society is that animals are at most *gatherers* whilst men are *producers*. This single but cardinal distinction alone makes it impossible simply to transfer the laws of animal societies to human societies. It makes it possible that, as you justly remark, " Man waged a struggle not only for existence but

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for enjoyment and for the increase of his enjoyments . . . he was ready to renounce the lower enjoyments for the sake of the higher." Without contesting your further deductions from this, the further conclusions I should draw from my premises would be the following :—At a certain stage, therefore, human production reaches a level where not only essential necessities but also luxuries are produced, even if, for the time being, they are only produced for a minority. Hence the struggle for existence —if we allow this category as valid here for a moment—transforms itself into a struggle for enjoyments, a struggle no longer for the mere means of *existence* but for the means of *development*, *socially produced* means of development, and at this stage the categories of the animal kingdom are no longer applicable. But if, as has now come about, production in its capitalist form produces a far greater abundance of the means of existence and development than capitalist society can consume, because capitalist society keeps the great mass of the real producers artificially removed from the means of existence and development ; if this society is forced, by the law of its own existence, continually to increase production already too great for it, and, therefore, periodically every ten years, reaches a point where it itself destroys a mass not only of products but of productive forces, what sense is there still left in the talk about the " struggle for existence ? " The struggle for existence can then only consist in the producing class taking away the control of production and distribution from the class hitherto entrusted with it but now no longer capable of it ; that, however, is the Socialist revolution.

Incidentally it is to be noted that the mere consideration of past history as a series of class struggles is enough to reveal all the superficiality of the conception of that same history as a slightly varied version of the " struggle for existence." I should therefore never make that concession to these spurious natural scientists.

(5) For the same reason I should have given a different formulation to your statement, which is substantially quite correct, " that the idea of solidarity, as a means of lightening the struggle, could ultimately expand to a point at which it embraces all humanity, counterposing it as a solidarised society of brothers to the rest of the world of minerals, vegetables and animals."

(6) On the other hand I cannot agree with you that the war of every man against every man was the first phase of human development. In my opinion the social instinct was one of the most essential levers in the development of man from the ape. The first men must have lived gregariously and so far back as we can see we find that this was the case.

* * * *

17th November. I have been interrupted afresh and take up these lines again to-day in order to send them to you. You will see that my

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remarks apply rather to the form, the method, of your attack than to its basis. I hope you will find them clear enough ; I have written them hurriedly and on re-reading them should like to change many words, but I am afraid of making the manuscript too illegible.

With cordial greetings,

F. ENGELS.

* * * *

The substance of this letter, omitting minor criticisms of Lavrov's article, will be found in one of the Notes in *Dialektik und Natur* (Marx-Engels Archiv II., page 190 cf. page 282) the work on the dialectic of nature for which Engels was making preparatory studies from 1873 onwards and which the death of Marx (1883) prevented him from completing.

(1) *Marx, Engels and Darwin.* Marx and Engels fully appreciated Darwin's great work. As Marx had discovered the law of development in human history so Darwin had discovered the law of development in organic nature, delivering the death-blow to teleology and mechanical determinism, furnishing proof of the dialectic of accident and necessity and giving the basis in natural science for the marxist theory of history. The three decisive 19th century discoveries which transformed natural science " from an empirical into a theoretical science . . . . a system of materialistic knowledge of nature " were the cell, the transformation of energy, and the theory of evolution called after Darwin. (Engels' speech at the graveside of Marx, letters and notes in the *Selected Correspondence*, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 39-37, *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 79-87.)[4] Marx wished to dedicate to Darwin chapters 12 and 13 of the English edition of *Capital*, Vol. I. (Kerr edition, chapters 14 and 15), but Darwin refused the dedication (for his letter see LABOUR MONTHLY, November, 1931). These chapters deal with the division of labour in manufacture and society and the development of machinery and modern industry : " Darwin has interested us in the history of nature's technology, i.e., in the formation of the organs of plants and animals, which organs serve as instruments of production for sustaining life. Does not the history of the productive organs of man, of organs that are the material basis of all social organisations, deserve equal attention ? " (*Capital*, Vol. I., page 406, note.)

What Marx and Engels criticised from the first was Darwin's " crude English method " (Correspondence, pp. 125-126, Marx, *Theorien über den Mehrwert* (Dietz,1905) Bd. II., 314, 315) in so naïvely adopting the Malthusian theory of " over-population " and the struggle for existence (see Darwin's Introduction (1860) to *The Origin of Species* and his *Autobiography*, chap. 2). See, however, Engels on Darwin in *Anti-Dühring* (p. 79-87) and the later passage in *Natur und Dialektik* (Marx-Engels Archiv, Vol. II., p. 282). For a full discussion from the biological standpoint see V. L. Komarov's essay in the symposium, *Marxism and Modern Thought* (Routledge, 1935).

(3) *Hobbes, Malthus, Darwin.* " It is remarkable how among beasts and plants Darwin recognises his English society with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, ' inventions ' and Malthusian ' struggle for existence.' It is Hobbes' war of every man against every man and reminds one of Hegel's *Phenomenology* where civil society figures as the ' spiritual animal kingdom,' whilst with Darwin the animal kingdom figures as civil

[4]All references are to English editions unless otherwise indicated.

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society." (Marx to Engels, June 18, 1862. *Gesamtausgabe* III., 3). See especially Engels' letter to Lange and Note, Correspondence, pp. 198-202. For Hobbes (1588-1679) and the state of nature as " the war of every man against every man "—an argument for absolutist government reflecting the dual tendencies of the early bourgeois period—see *Leviathan* (1651), Engels' Preface 1892 to *Socialism Utopian and Scientific*, and his letter to Schmidt, 27 October, 1890 ; also B. Hessen, " The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's Principia " in *Science at the Crossroads* (1931). The main thesis of Parson Malthus' *Essay on Population* (1798 and 1805), which reflected the trade crisis, high prices and heavy poor-rates of the Napoleonic war period, was " that the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man " ; hence war, famine and pestilence plus " moral restraint " as necessary checks, and " over-population " as the incentive to endeavour. The Malthusian corollary that the poor should be stopped from breeding, to which practical expression was given in the new Poor Law of 1834, is an extreme variant, appearing under various pseudo-scientific guises in times of economic crisis, of the more constant implicit theory that " the lower classes must be kept poor or they will never be industrious " (Young). Both forms flourish to-day, see the statistics of Sir John Orr and Dr. G. C. M. M'Gonigle. Is nature or human society to blame for economic misery ? was, roughly, the question which divided Malthus and his disciples from Godwin, Owen and the early Radical economists. That the fault lay with the property system and not with " nature " was reiterated by Cobbett (e.g., *Rural Rides*, *Political Register*) and the Chartists (see any Chartist paper on Malthus or Lord Brougham in the early thirties) ; in 1843 the young Engels gave the scientific answer when he attacked the " laws " of " diminishing productivity " and " over-population " in his *Outlines of a Criticism of Political Economy* (*Gesamtausgabe* I., 2), see Correspondence, pp. 32-33, 198, and for Ricardo's theory of rent in this connection, pp. 27-33, Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III., pp. 760-772 and *Theorien über den Mehrwert* (Bd. II. 304-317 ; cf III., 1-65). For facts see R. E. Prothero *English Farming* (1927), p. 272, etc. The later combination of the free competition, self-help and survival of the fittest doctrine of the " free-traders "—of philosophic radicalism, utilitarianism and bourgeois Darwinism—composing the ideology of *laissez-faire*, though superficially familiar, has never been fully studied. As an introduction see references *Marx-Engels Correspondence*, pp. 34, 35, and for social illustration, Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship* (1926).

(4) " *The essential difference between human and animal society.*" In *Work as the Factor in the Development of Apes into Men* (c. 1876), Engels argues that the differentiation of the hand from the foot, accomplished after thousands of years of struggle, was the prerequisite of man's development from the ape. Specialisation of the hand means the tool, and the tool means the specific activity of man, the transforming reaction of man to nature—production. (Not, of course, implying the " Yankee " definition of man as " a tool making animal " cf. *Capital*, Vol. I., p. 358.) Contrast Huxley's opposite valuation of the hand and foot, *Man's Place in Nature*, (*Collected Essays*, Vol. VII., p. 130.) See too J. D. Bernal, *Engels and Science* (Labour Monthly Pamphlets No. 6, 2d. Cf. also Komarov op. cit.) Engels' fundamental dialectical conception is that expressed throughout *Capital*—that man the worker transforms himself in the process of transforming nature—work made man. The argument here is completed in par. 6—" The social instinct," etc. " The first men must have lived gregariously." See *Capital*, Vol. I., p. 386, and Engels' *Origin of the Family*.

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"*Capitalist society produces more than it can consume.*" Cf. *Correspondence*, pp. 198-202, and *Capital* Vol. I., ch. 32. "*Periodically, every ten years*" . . . Marx and Engels studied the ten-year cyclic crises in England during the period of rising capitalism when Britain held the world trade monopoly. In 1886, Engels noted that since Britain had lost this monopoly "the period of crises as known hitherto is closed . . . We have entered a period incomparably more dangerous to the existence of the old Society than the period of ten-year crises." (Letter to Bebel, January 20-23.) The "great depression" which marked our transition to the epoch of imperialism was only in its earliest stage in 1875.

DONA TORR.

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BOOK REVIEWS

LIVING MARXISM IN BRITAIN.

Dialectics : The Logic of Marxism, and its Critics. By T. A. Jackson. (Lawrence and Wishart.) pp. 648. 10s. 6d.

NO review can do justice to this book, which is the first large-scale expression of the Marxist outlook and theory from the real living Marxist movement in the English-speaking countries. A wide Marxist culture is here combined with the racy vivacity of a Cobbett ; and the result will teach many, as no other book can, to begin to approach and understand Marxism in place of the fog of distortion which has been spread of late in increasing abundance. This is not to say that the present work is perfect in every line, or the last word on every subject it covers. But compared to the works that have so far been appearing from English pens on the theory of Marxism and dialectical materialism, it is as sunshine in contrast to a noisome swamp.

Marxist theory has notoriously had an unhappy history in the past in the English-speaking countries. Until the post-war period the majority of the principal works of Marx and Engels were either not available at all in English or were only available in shamelessly multilated translations, in which sheer misunderstanding and mistranslation combined with editorial impudence and excisions to throw a thick veil over their meaning. The recognised exponents of Marxist theory, represented especially by the Hyndman school in Britain and by the De Leon school in America, were below the level of their task, and succeeded in making the worst of both worlds, combining sectarianism with reformist delusions, and turning the whole into an arid dogma. The academic world, with at most only dim second-hand notions of this caricature and of nothing else as Marxism, ignored Marxism as an exploded superstition. Only a handful of the most courageous and clearest working-class fighters in this pre-war period succeeded in fighting their way through the thicket of obstacles, nevertheless, to draw inspiration from so much of Marxism as was available ; but their struggle was heavily impeded by shackles not of their own making. Of this old school of Marxist fighters and teachers in Britain, who have to-day been able to avail themselves of the rich resources of theory and practical experience now made available since the Bolshevik Revolution and the foundation of the Communist International, Jackson is one of the foremost and honoured representatives.

In the period since the war a new stage has developed. Marxism is visibly coming into its own ; but the old obstacles have been replaced by new ones. The general crisis of capitalism, the experience of the war and of the beginning of the world revolution, brought new life to the understanding of Marxism. The availability of the writings of Lenin and the Bolshevik theorists, and the work of the Communist International, threw a flood of light on old controversies and cleared the way for the first time to real understanding. The works of Marx and Engels, as well as of Lenin and Stalin, have begun to become available in carefully edited translations, with a wealth that would have seemed like a dream of miracles to a pre-war militant. At the same time, especially since the world economic crisis and fascism began to shatter the old illusions, the bourgeois intellectual world has begun—very late— to awaken to Marxism.

But just here have arisen the new difficulties. The wealth of Marxist-Leninist theory now available to English readers requires considerable and

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painstaking study to master it. At the same time the demands of the practical struggle have never been more urgent and ceaseless than through all these post-war years. Thus, while the living representatives of the Marxist movement in Britain, the leaders of the working class fight have been necessarily absorbed in the immediate struggle and immediate polemics, a tendency has developed among wide circles of the bourgeois intellectuals, including those who have consistently opposed the revolutionary struggle, to make the general field of Marxist theory, and especially dialectical materialism, their playground, filling the air with their lucubrations long before they have reached serious understanding. The recent "boom" in Marxism has led to the appearance of a number of works of very varying value, not of Marxist discussion of specific problems and issues, but purporting, often with extremely meagre equipment, to "explain" Marxism in general like a philosophical school; and in many cases "Marxism" has only been made a peg for the writer to hang his own half-baked theories. While the increasing approach of the bourgeois intellectual and scientific world towards Marxism is a valuable and important development of the present period, to be assisted in every possible way, this approach has only been hindered by these works, in which the writers, combining ignorance with insolence in equal proportions, have taken on themselves to "interpret" and "improve" according to their own images what Marx "really meant," *i.e.*, in reality to carry forward the old fight against Marxism under a new dress. This situation was fast becoming a scandal; while the limited circles of the seriously equipped Marxist movement in Britain were too actively engaged in urgent issues to have time to deal in detail with all the nonsense put out. The field of general Marxist theory and of dialectical materialism was thus beginning to be increasingly occupied, in respect of works of English origin, by at the best, confused camp-followers, and, at the worst, thinly disguised enemies. There was urgent need for real Marxism to deal with this situation.

The appearance of Jackson's book is the first welcome signal of the new stage which is now opening, in which the real living Marxist movement, equipped with the wealth of new theoretical resources now available, turns and rends the pseudo-Marxism that has been occupying the stage, and vindicates Marxism anew. Jackson is not here concerned directly with those sympathetic elements, especially among the younger scientists, who are approaching Marxism, but still with many confusions; the task of critically helping these, of great importance, has still to be carried out. But Jackson deals with the blatant pseudo-Marxists, in reality anti-Marxists, who have been in the forefront in England and the United States; and with these he deals faithfully and without mercy. At the same time he gives a positive all-round introduction to the study of Marxism, which is not only a hundred times better equipped in sheer knowledge and study than all the academic distorters, but at the same time, by its closeness to the living political struggle and to daily life, as well as by its practical knowledge through a lifetime of discussion of all the actual difficulties and questionings that arise among English readers, will perform an invaluable service at the present stage for all who are seeking to understand Marxism in England and America.

His initial approach is a refreshing contrast to the myriad host of "explainers" and "simplifiers" who seek to replace Marx by their own superior presentations, and, as he says, "calmly take it for granted that they understand Marxism far better than Marx understood it himself." "No pretence is made," he says modestly at the outset, "that this essay is in any way final or authoritative." For him the unity of theory and practice is no mere theory, but a reality:

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> The Marxist world-conception is primarily *a theory of action*, one derived so intimately from the facts of life and struggle that he who declares himself a Marxist thereby takes upon himself the responsibility for *living* Marxism as well as preaching it. (p. 11.)

This is the voice of the real movement. He criticises acutely the dominant tendency in previous British Marxist literature, to present endless supposedly " simplified " potted-meat versions of Marxism as a substitute for what Marx and Engels have already said very clearly, in place of assisting to deal with real problems and remove difficulties :

> Apart from a score of works, all of recent date, in which an attempt is made to elucidate current problems by the aid of Marxist theory, this native British Marxist literature consists almost wholly of works purporting to " explain " Marxist theory in the *abstract*, in terms suited to the (presumably *infantile*) understanding of the plain man.

On this " simplification " obession and its dangers, he says admirably :

> No objection is raised here to simplification as such. On the contrary, no work could be more useful than that of presenting Marxism in such a way as can easily be assimilated by the ordinary man. What calls for protest is that those who in Britain set out to " simplify " Marx commonly begin by reducing him to a *simpleton*, and those who offer to " explain " him are as a rule primarily concerned *to explain him away*.
>
> We take the ground here that Marx and Engels (and this applies also to Lenin and Stalin) are their own best expounders ; that to attempt to " simplify " that which they have already made as simple as it is humanly possible to make it, cannot fail to result in a distortion of their plain sense and a misrepresentation of their plain meaning. Not " simplification," but *amplification* and, above all, *application* is what Marxism needs in Britain. (pp. 11-12.)

This needed saying ; and only on this basis can a useful introduction to the study of Marxism be written.

What, then, is Jackson's method ? Jackson does not attempt to present a peptonised system of supposed universal principles of Marxism, which would be contrary to the whole spirit and method of Marxism, and can only create the effect of a dogma (" dialectical materialism is the negation of any and every variety of dogmatism," p. 632). Instead, he first traces the living growth and development of the Marxist world conception on the basis of the " Theses on Feuerbach " and the " German Ideology " and the controversies and struggles of the period. This is one of the most valuable sections of the book, making available to the main body of English readers and explaining much of the new material that is only beginning to become familiar to the English movement. This approach requires the examination of a host of theoretical trends as well as Marx ; and just by this all-round approach the whole understanding of Marxism is enriched. Having thus established his basis, Jackson proceeds to demonstrate the Marxist method, both positively and polemically, in a wide series of fields, philosophical, natural-scientific, historical, the theory of society, economics, political questions, revolution and reformism, etc. Finally he discusses and flays certain English distorters of Marxism, and in so doing is able to clear up many questions and confusions that have been especially rife in the English-speaking movement.

The special value of Jackson's method and treatment for the present stage of the movement in England and America lies, first, in the wide range of his approach (which inevitably required a book of this size, and not a school textbook) ; second, in his closeness to his readers and to the daily life of the working-class movement, and understanding of the difficulties and questionings felt by them ; and third, in his splendidly vivid controversial style.

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The wide range of Jackson's book, which has been objected to by some critics (certainly, it leads to the inevitable difficulty of a high price, but this can be met to some extent by collective means, through libraries, through working class organisations, and through clubbing together), is of first importance for the subject-matter ; for only so can the empty schematism of the ordinary textbook treatment be replaced by flesh and blood. Jackson writes on the basis of a wide general culture. There can be no other basis for a Marxist understanding ; and it supplies a splendid corrective to the narrowness still of much of the writing in the English-speaking movement. And here let it be said that precisely this wide general culture of Jackson marks him off from, and puts to shame, the majority of the university-trained distorters of Marxism, who only display, when they come to deal with Marx, their own lack of acquaintance with the general development of thought and low level of education outside their speciality. Not only the Marxist writings, and the thought of his immediate philosophical predecessors, of Spinoza, the French eighteenth century materialists, Kant or Hegel, or the problems of politics and the working-class movement, but the thought and writings of Heine, of Spencer, of Comte, of Marat, of Burke, of Hobbes, of Tyndall, of Buckle, etc., all figure freely in Jackson's writing, not as casual quotations or references, but falling into place as part of the texture of the world of thought and its development.

Second, Jackson always explains for his readers, and never assumes knowledge. This is a priceless virtue and makes this book a genuinely popular book. He does not seek to parade his learning to overawe his readers by cryptic references and allusions. If he refers to some one, if he refers to a book, if he refers to a saying or standard term, he proceeds at once to explain who that somebody was, when he lived and what he did, what that book was about, or what that term means and why it arose. This is the art of the practised teacher. It means that none need fear to read this book because of the difficulties of the subject.

It might be imagined that a volume of such bulk, with over six hundred pages, on subjects often of considerable difficulty, would be heavy reading. On the contrary, it is a joy to read. This is not only due to Jackson's inimitable style, his wit, the cut-and-thrust of his controversy, his boisterous Rabelaisian exuberance of language and imagination and illustrations from daily life. Sometimes this very exuberance of language leads him, in the field of serious definitions into involved formulations which are not altogether clear (some examples might be found on pp. 277 and 279). But what carries the reader through all is the abounding life and humanity of the book. The joy of battle breathes through every page.

Jackson's slaughter of his opponents is a veritable massacre. It might be objected that these opponents, these Murrys, MacMurrays, Postgates and what not, are very small fry, of considerably less importance in any serious discussion of Marxism than he appears to accord them, and that their blunderings are more suitable for the realm of farce than of scientific criticism. Such an objection would fail to see the reason and purpose of Jackson's treatment of these examples. The importance of these examples does not lie in their intellectual content, but in the fact that they exist, are circulated, discussed, and even studied by sincere students, who desire to find their way to Marxism and are in danger of being put off by these substitutes. Therefore it is necessary to deal with them. The temptation to regard them as below the level of criticism is incorrect. The fallacies that are obvious to Marxists are not necessarily obvious to the general reading public. Just their rambling inconsequence and

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incapacity of coherent argument make them more troublesome to deal with than a serious critic. Jackson has fought, not only the critics and political leaders of reformism and revisionism, but also the idiots, cranks and freaks on the fringes of Marxism. That is no small achievement. For it is often more laborious to answer one argument of a fool than ten of a sensible man.

In one field, in particular, Jackson has done invaluable service ; and that is in respect of some of the peculiar versions of Marxism associated to-day with the "Plebs" and the official teachings of the Labour College movement, especially the Caseys, Woodburns and others. It is unfortunate that what began as a militant Marxist educational movement of the left wing, even if with the limitations of the stage of Marxism in Britain at that time, has fallen to-day into becoming the home of much anti-Marxist and anti-revolutionary teaching, and even of political adventurers who spend their time sniping at the revolutionary movement. Here Jackson, with a long record of honourable service in the Labour College movement, is able to speak with special authority ; and his words will carry weight and assist the rising militant movement who are seeking to win the Labour College movement anew for Marxism. It may be noted that a long review in the official organ of this movement has made no attempt to answer the main points of his damning indictment.

It is inevitable that in a work of this wide range, covering so many difficult subjects, there should be points in respect of detail formulations and arguments open to discussion. In particular, in the section dealing with questions of the physical sciences, Jackson has ventured boldly into realms of extremely specialised controversies, and may expect some criticisms from scientists. In some other sections there are points which it might be useful to take up further on another occasion (*e.g.*, the definition of "class" on p. 458, the rather curious limitation of the definition of "history" in connection with the "Communist Manifesto" on p. 292, the statement on p, 479 that "only a revolutionary alternative is thinkable under fascism"). This is not the place to take up these detail points, which would require a separate review. These minor detail points of controversy do not diminish the enormous positive value of this work, and the service it can accomplish, at the present stage in the English-speaking movement.

R.P D.

THE PROBLEMS OF NUTRITION.

Food, Health and Income. Sir John Boyd Orr. Macmillan. 72 pp. 2s. 6d.

IT has always been obvious that the poor could not afford the food that the well-to-do considered necessary for themselves. Yet there has been great reluctance to accept this fact and its corollary, that the health of the poor suffered in consequence. The great disparity between the health and physique of the well-to-do and poor has been ignored or ascribed to anything but differences in the standard of living. A very striking exposition of this disparity is given by Dr. René Sand in his book, *Health and Human Progress.*[1] He gives a wealth of data drawn mainly from Western Europe and the U.S.A. ; but the most valuable part of his book is that which refutes the theories that this health disparity is due to heredity or to the failure of certain races to adapt themselves to the conditions of "civilised" life. For he shows that when economic conditions are the same there are no differences between the health statistics (such as

[1]Kegan Paul. Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd. 1935. 278 pp. Price, 10s. 6d.

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infant mortality rate of one race and another).

The New Knowledge of Food Requirements

With regard to food the position has been curious. The well-to-do regarded certain food as necessary for their families ; yet the poor were supposed to be able to "manage somehow" without these foods, and were even accused of extravagance if they bought them. Conversely, it was claimed that what the poor really needed was instruction in food values, so that they would spend their money more wisely. It is true that, to a large extent, the wish was father to such thoughts. Nevertheless, the lack of precise knowledge of food requirements did furnish some excuse. Even when Rowntree in his book, *Poverty—A Study of Town Life*, showed, as a result of careful investigation, that a large proportion of the working class in York could not afford the then accepted food requirements, he was criticised by a physiologist of some reputation (Professor, later Sir William, Bayliss) on the grounds that he had put the standard of food requirements unnecessarily high.

The developments of physiological knowledge in the last quarter-of-a-century have largely justified the food habits of those who do not need to stint themselves in respect of food. Values have been shifted somewhat ; for example, more importance has been attached to milk and fresh fruit. But on the whole it has been shown that the food eaten by families that can be considered comfortably off, is actually needed for their health and growth. The consequences of deficiencies in such foods have been determined and the amounts required for full development and health can be approximately defined. It follows that, if the poor "manage somehow" on a lower food standard, they must manage at the expense of their health and the development of their children.

"Minimum Diets"

The scientific study of nutrition gives no approval to the idea of minimum diets. For not only do the elementary requirements of different individuals differ, and the requirements of the same individual vary with the conditions under which he lives ; but also, variety and choice of food are good both for body and mind. Apart from these considerations, it is now fully established that there are degrees of health and development ; that the amounts of various constituents (such as animal protein and vitamins) required to prevent gross disease are considerably less than the amounts required to produce the highest level of health and development. Theoretically and practically it is impossible to fix an exact point beyond which no improvement could be effected by a change of diet. In practice a fair margin of safety is necessary. Minimum diets are part and parcel of the Poverty Line concept, a standard some thirty per cent. below what Rowntree calls the minimum Human Needs, "a standard below which no class of workers should ever be expected to live." When the process is carried a stage further and the minimum cost of diet is calculated, a further step is taken away from adequacy. For in the nature of things it is impossible for a householder to buy regularly at minimum prices. Nevertheless, these minimum diets and minimum costs should not be dismissed. For, taken in conjunction with surveys of income they have been of genuine service in showing, without any fear of contradiction, that considerable proportions of the general population and still larger proportions of children cannot possibly get an adequate diet.

National Under-nutrition

In certain local social surveys, for example that of Merseyside, family food budgets have been collected, and the relation of the consumption of various foodstuffs to income level has been worked out. These have shown that, at the lower income levels, grossly inadequate amounts of the more expensive foods are eaten. Sir John Boyd Orr here publishes a study of this relation between food and income in the whole of Great Britain. This study is based on previous local

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surveys and on a large and widespread survey carried out last year. His method differs from those of previous studies in two particulars. (1) He classifies families, according to income per head ; this is more just than a classification based on total family income, but rather over-emphasises the importance of children as an economic factor affecting the standard of living. (2) He compares the food bought with an *optimum* standard, based on the physiological ideal, defined as "a state of well-being such that no improvement can be effected by a change of diet." A diet conforming with this standard, he considers, costs 9s. to 10s. per head per week, and this standard is only attained in families in which the total income per head is at least 20s. a week—a level only reached by about half the population.

It has been pointed out above that it is practically impossible to fix a hard and fast "optimum diet" standard ; and it is doubtful if the diet at the 20s. a week per head level can properly be regarded as optimum. It is unlikely that a pregnant woman in a family at this income level could afford the diet which Professor Mellanby has, on fully adequate grounds, recommended, viz. : 2 pints of milk a day ; 1 or 2 eggs a day ; a liberal helping of green vegetable or salad once a day ; an apple or orange or other fresh fruit once a day ; sea fish once a week ; a teaspoonful of cod liver oil three times a day ; the rest of the diet as she wishes.

It is certain that children in such families do not get the quart of milk a day considered advisable by American workers. Orr, himself, does not appear wholly satisfied. In respect of one constituent—calcium—he introduces a higher standard with a margin for safety. Surely an "optimum" standard should include a margin for safety. Although he does not say so in so many words, he seems to appreciate the advantages of a diet, such as that only attained by his wealthiest group (weekly income over 45s. per head), which provides an ample margin of safety in every particular. Maybe Orr did not wish his claims to be too startling ; as it

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is they are disturbing enough. The diet of 50 per cent. of the population, some 20 millions is, at best, not wholly adequate. In the poorest group which includes some 10 per cent. of the general population, *but some 20 to 25 per cent. of the children*, the diet is inadequate in every particular considered. Extreme disparities between the poorest and wealthiest groups appear in the consumption of just those articles of diet, such as milk, fruit and green vegetables, which are now realised to be of the highest nutritional importance.

The National Food Budget

In his last annual report for 1934, the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health has criticised the type of family budget survey on which Orr has based his conclusions, on the grounds that though people may give a correct account of the type of food they buy, they may not report the amounts correctly. This argument is weak. In such surveys the food budget is usually compared with the family income, less rent and other constant outgoings, which can be determined with certainty. The cost of food is the main remaining expense and any serious discrepancy between the amount claimed to be spent on food and the amount available for food purchase is readily detectable. This is very clear, for example, in the very detailed and thorough examinations of family budgets in Stockton-on-Tees by Dr. M'Gonigle and J. Kirby, which has appeared in a book on *Poverty and Public Health*, published by Victor Gollancz last month.

Orr, however, refutes this argument in another way. He has compared the actual total amounts of foods sold in the country with the sum of the total amounts bought, according to his estimates, in the various income groups. The two totals agree satisfactorily, so that his estimates cannot be seriously out.

From the data so available Orr is able to calculate how much the total consumption of various foods would need to be increased in order to bring the consumption in the poorer groups (A) up to his standard, and (B) up to the level of the wealthiest groups, providing an ample margin of safety in all particulars. (A) would involve an increase of 16 per cent. in the case of milk and 25 per cent. in the case of fruit, while (B) would involve increases of 80 and 124 per cent.

The Consequences of Under-nutrition

It has been objected that if a large proportion of the population is underfed, as Orr and other investigators indicate, there should be evidence of this underfeeding in an excessive degree of ill-health. The answer to this objection is that there is such evidence. Underfeeding is one of the factors causing the great disparities in health studied by Dr. René Sands. Orr cites some of the more unquestionable of the defects due to under-feeding ; for example, the widespread anæmia among women, rickets and decayed teeth among children, and the great differences in height and weight between elementary and public school boys. He also gives instances of the remarkable improvements which can be effected by a more generous diet.

Orr therefore disposes of the idea that the poor can " manage somehow " without detriment to health. He gives no countenance to the idea that affairs can be improved by instruction in food values. This point is dealt with more fully by M'Gonigle. His detailed studies show that, as a whole, working women show great skill and judgment in the purchase of food.

Why this Publicity ?

Orr's conclusions have not met with an unqualified welcome in the past. When he first produced them at the British Association Meeting in 1934, the *Times* omitted all mention of his paper from what was claimed to be a full account of the meeting. Now, however, great publicity has been given in the Press to his book and to other investigations into nutrition. A number of the Quarterly Bulletin of the League of Nations Health Organisation has been devoted to the consideration of under-nutrition.

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A newly-appointed Advisory Committee on Nutrition to the Ministry of Health has issued a popular pamphlet on the value and need for increased consumption of milk. There are various reasons that have led to this change of attitude. In the first place a word should be said about the attitude of the Scientific Investigator himself. In order to put a gap between him and the mass of the workers he has usually been encouraged to hold an exaggerated view of the value of his work. When he sees his work frustrated, as the application of advances in the science of nutrition have been frustrated by economic conditions, he is apt to protest vigorously, whatever may be his attitude to the capitalist system. By himself he usually cannot make his voice heard outside a very narrow circle, but powerful interests may be found willing to broadcast his protests.

It is highly probable that some of the researches on nutrition have been endowed with the hope of discovering methods of reducing the workers' food without detriment to their health. If this is the case, the researchers have not so far delivered the goods. Rather, science has formed a united front with appetite to demand better and more expensive food for the workers. The whole trend of recent work emphasises the need of the costlier foods. It was this that determined the former attitude to the results of investigations of nutritional requirements in relation to actual consumption. But here one of the contradictions of capitalism comes in. Although capitalist interests must keep down the workers' standard of living, each producer of consumption goods wants to dispose of as much as possible of his products to the workers. When Orr recommends a large increase in milk consumption, the Milk Marketing Board cannot but regard him with the highest approval. In fact, some of Orr's investigations have been financed by the Milk Marketing Board. Such organisations of food producers have recently risen to position of considerable power. They have large sums allotted for purposes of advertisement. A half-page advertisement issued by the Milk Marketing Board appears in the *Evening Standard*, quoting with approval the report on milk of the Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Health. Such arguments have great weight with the Press, and even the *Times* devoted a column to Orr's book, although it could not bring itself to mention his name, and ascribed the authorship of the book to the "Committee of the League of Nations!"

Militarism Cannot Live by Armaments alone

But there are other reasons for a new attitude towards studies of the social aspects of nutrition. Of two-and-a-half million men examined in the last year of the war, only 36 per cent. were found fit for general service, while 41.5 per cent. were fit only for sedentary work or unfit for any form of military service. With the prospect of another war upon us it is being realised, at the eleventh hour, that the country may again be handicapped

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NEWNES

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by the inferior quality of its cannon fodder. In a recent Editorial in *Nature* (1936. p. 509), we read:

> It is too late in the day to divorce consideration of defence from those of general welfare. The difficulties which the fighting services find in obtaining recruits of a sufficiently high standard of physique and intelligence are a sufficient reminder that national defence is a matter not merely of armaments and defence forces, but also of adequate education, nutrition and housing. A defence plan which disregards the general physical and mental welfare of the nation, makes no effort to deal with the insidious effects of unemployment especially among young persons, and provides inadequately for education or the health and recreation services of the country, will collapse at the first test through weakening of national morale.

The Planners

Another reason for publicity is the vague altruism of well-intentioned persons, disturbed by "Poverty in the midst of Plenty." Among such persons we find the Planners. These include all types. At one extreme are those who wish to maintain the capitalist system and pacify the workers and their own consciences by some form of rationalisation of the supply of necessities, which will enable the workers' standard of living to be raised without extra expense. At the other extreme are those who realise the inevitability of a revolutionary solution, but jib at taking the decisive step of throwing in their lot with the workers. They like to think that, in drawing up their plans, they are doing something that will come in useful when others have put the job through. A typical group of Planners—the Engineers' Study Group—recently held a meeting at the Royal Society of Arts, at which they unfolded their ideas of a general minimum standard of living, that would be both desirable and practicable.[3] This they considered could be obtained, at present price levels, at the cost of £6 per week for an average family of 3.72 persons; food for such a family costing 38s. a week. Their efforts can hardly be considered as practical as those of a man lost in a desert who should devote his energies to planning the meals he will have if ever he should find his way back to civilisation. For, by the time that the whole of the population can command this standard of living, the whole significance of £6 a week will have changed, the system of renting houses will be altered, and the whole organisation of the supply of commodities will be fundamentally reorganised.

These Planners may also be dangerous. The above-quoted Report of the Engineers' Study Group claims that, since the "statistical average family" contains over one wage earner, the £6 per average family per week required for the Engineers' Study Group standard of living is equivalent to 63s. per week for each wage earner. However, most families pass through a period during which they contain only one wage earner. This happens when the children are young. If the wage of the individual earner is no more than 63s. a week most families will be unable to buy adequate food during this period, when the children are young and the effects of an inadequate diet most serious.

The Meaning for the Workers

Although much of this planning is fatuous, it has some good effects; and whatever the motives behind this new publicity, the workers can use it in their struggle for immediate objectives. It shows that the capitalist class accepts the fact that, at the present level of wages, a large proportion of the workers cannot afford the food necessary for the health and proper development of themselves and their families.

A Doctor.

[3] Report on *The Design of a Family Budget*, obtainable from The Engineers' Study Group on Economics, Hazlitt House, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2. Price, 6d.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Sanctions Without Sanction. J. M. N. Jeffries. (Cullompton, Devon.) 14 pp. 3d.

Marxism and the National Question. J. Stalin. (Martin Lawrence.) 304 pp. 5s.

The Poverty of Philosophy. Karl Marx. (Martin Lawrence.) 214 pp. 5s.

Thinking. Prof. H. Levy. (Newnes.) 222 pp. 5s.

Karl Marx. Franz Mehring. (John Lane.) 575 pp. 15s.

Why Socialism? Jayaprakash Marayan. (All India Congress Socialist Party.) 160 pp. 1s.

New Life. Vol. I. No. 1. In English and Yiddish. (Icos, 15 Gt. Alie Street, E.1.) 20 pp. 2d.

Lenin : Selected Works. Vols. I.–VI. (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 2 Parton Street, W.C.1.) 560 pp., 568 pp., 630 pp., 450 pp., 392 pp., and 660 pp. 5s. each.

Letters from Prison. Ernst Toller. (John Lane.) 369 pp. 12s. 6d.

Easter, 1916. Montagu Slater. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 79 pp. 2s. 6d.

Easter Week. Brian O'Neil. (Lawrence and Wishart.) 96 pp. 2s.

Skutarevsky. Leonid Leonov. Lovat Dickson.) 430 pp. 8s. 6d.

London's Burning. Barbara Wootton. (Allen and Unwin.) 284 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Distribution of National Capital. G. W. Daniels and H. Campion. (Manchester University Press.) 62 pp. 5s.

Jawaharlal Nehru. An Autobiography. (John Lane.) 618 pp. 15s.

Reactionary England! H. R. G. Greaves. (The Acorn Press.) 160 pp. 5s.

Technical Education. An Immediate Programme. Barbara Drake and Tobias Weaver. (New Fabian Research Bureau.) 36 pp. 6d.

New Writing : I. Spring, 1936. Edited by John Lehmann. (John Lane.) 223 pp. 6s.

From Hegel to Marx. Sidney Hook. (Gollancz.) 385 pp. 10s. 6d.

The Theory of International Trade with its Applications to Commercial Policy. Translated from the German. (Hodge.) 408 pp. 21s.

An Essay on the Restoration of Property. Hilaire Belloc. (The Distributist League.) 89 pp. 1s.

Raw Materials and Colonies. (With Appendices.) Information Department Papers, No. 18. (Royal Institute of International Affairs.) 68 pp. 2s. 6d.

Out of the Night. A Biologist's view of the future. H. J. Muller. (Gollancz.) 160 pp. 4s. 6d.

Ways and Means. A Study of the Economic Structure of Gt. Britain To-day. Geoffrey Crowther. (Macmillan.) 207 pp. 4s. 6d.

An Introduction to Dialectical Materialism. Edward Conze (N.C.L.C. Publishing Society.) 59 pp. 1s.

Creative America, Its Resources for Social Security. Mary van Kleek. (Covici Friede, New York.) 353 pp. 12s.

Revolt on the Clyde. William Gallacher, M.P. An Autobiography. (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd.) 301 pp. 10s. 6d.

I am a Heretic. Vanoc II. Peter Davies. 213 pp. 6s.

Continued on page 456)

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The Birthday Appeal

SOME thirty-seven readers have responded up to the time of going to press to the special appeal made in last month's issue for a birthday gift to the MONTHLY on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of its foundation in July, 1921.

Amongst these there is a most welcome greeting from the Communist Party of Canada. The high regard in which the MONTHLY is held by overseas, as well as by British, revolutionary readers is well illustrated by this letter: accordingly we make no apology for quoting from it below:

> The Central Committee of our Party in Canada wishes the LABOUR MONTHLY and its staff further success in promoting a greater understanding of the tasks of the British Labour Movement.
>
> The LABOUR MONTHLY has helped us in Canada and we pledge to assist in its publication and growth.

The fact that in the period January, 1935 to March, 1936, sales of the MONTHLY in Canada rose by 59 per cent. shows that the Canadian Communist Party amongst others must have already been doing splendid work. We hope that this will be an encouragement to other organisations and individuals both here and overseas to redouble their efforts.

We would also like to quote from another birthday letter from a Scottish reader who encloses a generous gift, in the course of which he says:

> I trust that the LABOUR MONTHLY will go from strength to strength, especially now that every sincere socialist can see that your outlook has been proven by events—if political faith be not enough—to have been fully justified.

We are sure that readers will be interested in such a striking and simultaneous confirmation from an entirely independent source of one of the arguments that Strachey puts forward in his article earlier in this issue.

Last month's birthday gift appeal was backed up by a review of the finances of the LABOUR MONTHLY. This review made it clear that we are not yet out of the wood, though during this period a large number of readers have given splendid support in reducing the existing debt and in insuring the future for which the MONTHLY is profoundly grateful.

Here is a short summary of the progress made and the present point reached. *The Debt*, though it has been reduced from its original figure of £480 in September, 1934, *still stands at* £290. *The monthly deficit*, to meet which the Guarantee Fund was launched, owing to a splendid increase in circulation has been reduced from £29 a month but *nevertheless still stands at* £22.

The Birthday cards were produced last month in order to send off with flying colours this renewed appeal for the Debt Fund to liquidate the £290 of accumulated debt.

The respectable sum of £25 17 10½ has been collected, but the LABOUR MONTHLY is convinced that there must be many more readers who for one reason or another have had to delay sending their gift. We take this occasion of reminding them. They can either fill in the birthday card enclosed in last month's issue or fill up one of the forms to be found on the page after next.

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(*Continued from page 453*)

Arms and the Unions. Reg. Groves. (Socialist League.) 12 pp. 1d.

The London Transport Scandal. Arthur Downton. (London District Committee, Communist Party, 133 East Road, N.1.) 29 pp. 1d.

Poverty and Public Health. C. C. M. McGonigle and J. Kirby. (Gollancz.) 278 pp. 6s.

Poems. R. P. Hewett. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 57 pp. 5s.

Dawn Over Samarkand. The Rebirth of Central Asia. Joshua Kunitz. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 348 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Special Powers Act of Northern Ireland. (National Council for Civil Liberties.) 40 pp. 6d.

Soviet Sidelights. Foreword by Jawarharlal Nehru. M. R. Masani. (All India Congress Socialist Party.) 90 pp. 1s. 6d.

Ireland To-day. No. 1. Vol. 1. 49 Staffort Street, Dublin. 1s.

Hitler the Pawn. Rudolf Olden. (Gollancz.) 288 pp. 8s. 6d.

The Coolie. Mulk Raj Anand. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 343 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Rise of European Liberalism. Harold J. Laski. (Allen & Unwin.) 287 pp. 7s. 6d.

China's Red Army Marches. Agnes Smedley. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 311 pp. 5s.

Next Year's War? A study of rival imperialisms. F. A. Ridley. (Martin Secker & Warburg.) 214 pp. 3s. 6d.

Justice in a Depressed Area. Charles Muir. (Allen & Unwin.) 216 pp. 6s.

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